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Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Mernier .... (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items

Mr. Tejeira (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Panama, on behalf of the countries of the Rio Group, has the honour to speak under the item on transparency in armaments. Confidence- and security-building measures, and transparency in armaments in particular, are especially useful in guaranteeing diplomacy to ensure international peace and security. The United Nations and regional organizations must play an important role in the area of international arms transfers and in the elimination of the illicit trafficking of arms. However, the cooperation of the international community is indispensable if we are to be successful in our work.

States must work together to control armaments and promote confidence with a view to preventing and reducing the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of armaments. The adoption of concrete measures to promote transparency makes a crucial contribution to the collective security system of the San Francisco Charter.

Participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms should be expanded and consolidated over time, as it is an effective tool for promoting peace. We appeal to all States, if they have not yet done so, to cooperate with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

The heads of State or Government of the member States of the Rio Group met in Panama on 4 and 5 September 1998 and stated their conviction that the implementation of confidence-and security-building measures in the hemisphere would gradually promote cooperation in the transparency of defence policies and, from a contemporary and comprehensive perspective, would help strengthen the institutions and instruments that make up the hemispheric security system.

They reiterated their aim of moving gradually towards effective limitation of conventional weapons in the region in order to devote more resources to the economic and social development of our peoples.

They also affirmed their support for the initiative to convene the Rio Group's Ad Hoc Working Group on conventional weapons limitation with a view to adopting a recommendation at the thirteenth summit.

In this context, we welcome the political declaration of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), Bolivia and Chile as a zone of peace, signed at the fourteenth summit of Presidents, held at Ushuaia on 24 July 1998, in which the Presidents, among other commitments, agreed to proclaim the MERCOSUR area, Bolivia and Chile a zone of peace free from weapons of mass destruction; agreed to advance towards declaring the zone free from anti-personnel landmines and to try to extend this zone to cover the entire western hemisphere; and reiterated their commitment to expand and systematize information from the Register of Conventional Arms and to devise standardized methodology for information on military expenditure with a view to increasing transparency and promoting confidence.

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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At the regional level, the recent adoption of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials is very important for the American continent. It contributes to establishing links and increasing opportunities for cooperation among the countries in the region, to the benefit of our joint efforts against factors that imperil the security of individuals and States. The Convention corresponds to the aim of the Organization of American States (OAS) to effectively limit conventional arms and thus allow more resources to be devoted to economic and social development.

We have seen that the alarming incidence of illicit traffic in arms is having a negative impact on transparency in this area. Increased transparency and concrete measures, such as those adopted in the context of American States, can serve as a basis for the United Nations to set up machinery that has a global aim.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): First, I should like to express our pleasure and gratitude at seeing you, Sir, in the Chair of the Committee. You can be assured of the full support of my delegation in your work.

My delegation takes the floor to speak on transparency in armaments, and more particularly on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43. This is not the first time that my delegation has spoken on transparency in armaments. We have done so for many years in the First Committee in the run-up to and the follow-up of the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We have also done so, in a wider context, in the Conference on Disarmament, which we still find to be the appropriate forum to discuss transparency in all its aspects. There we have the necessary expertise to deal with the issue in a substantive and comprehensive manner.

It is for that reason that we favour, as the Committee will undoubtedly be aware, the establishment of an ad hoc committee on transparency in armaments in the Conference on Disarmament. That committee would have a deliberative mandate in order to allow for an open — I am tempted to say "transparent" — and in-depth discussion of all the aspects involved and to study the wealth of proposals and ideas which are so ably compiled in the document recently produced by the Conference on Disarmament secretariat in Geneva. I trust that the Conference on Disarmament will be more than willing to enter into substantive work on this matter next year.

In this brief intervention I should like to concentrate on three aspects of transparency. First, I should like to dwell on some of the essential characteristics of transparency measures, and more generally of confidence-building measures, since I believe that there continue to exist misunderstandings about the very nature of confidence-building and of the United Nations Register.

Secondly, I should like to put the issue of transparency in a slightly broader context than our draft resolution in the First Committee. It is not only through this draft resolution that transparency in armaments can or should be promoted. There are other instances and forums where aspects of transparency in the right context are also being discussed and negotiated.

Thirdly, I should like to give some explanation about the content of the draft resolution and particularly to clarify the statement in the draft resolution about the continuing operation of the Register and its further development.

An essential characteristic of confidence-building measures is that they work only if they are agreed upon freely by all concerned in the interests of peace and security for all. This notion is implied by the very nature of confidence-building and the way it is approached in the United Nations. Confidence needs two sides, which means that confidence-building measures will not lend themselves to the imposition of particular measures on any country. Attempts in that direction show a lack of understanding of what confidence-building is all about. The United Nations Register is therefore a voluntary measure to which we continue to believe that all countries should voluntarily provide the requested data and information.

Another feature of confidence-building measures is that they can be agreed upon at the global level. These are measures of a general nature that are expected to contribute to global security, often as an integral part of our continuous endeavour towards global disarmament and arms control. These global efforts should, however, allow for, and more importantly should encourage and be complemented by, regional and subregional measures and approaches that are tailored to the security situation and security needs of the countries and regions involved.

The last point I should like to make on the general features of confidence-building, and the role of transparency therein, is obvious but apparently not generally recognized. It is the observation that confidence-building measures, and transparency measures for that matter, by themselves do not and cannot solve regional problems or conflicts. Confidence-building is only a small but necessary part of increased security at both the regional level and the global level.

On my second subject, the broader context of transparency, I should simply like to state that the draft resolution we are introducing today should not be seen as the only instrument in which transparency should be addressed. It is not an omnibus draft resolution on transparency, and the co-sponsors do not have the intention of turning it into one. Our draft resolution focuses, in a consensual manner, on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development. The United Nations standardized reporting system on military expenditures is also a transparency measure, and transparency is a central point in the discussions on small arms. These issues are addressed in other draft resolutions in the Committee.

We are fully aware that transparency is also an important element of discussions and negotiations relating to weapons of mass destruction, not as a confidence-building measure but as an element in compliance regimes or safeguards systems. Transparency is an important element of the Chemical Weapons Convention verification regime. In the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention, hard work is under way on an effective compliance regime that should provide us with the necessary means to verify in a transparent manner that no biological weapons are developed, produced, stockpiled or used.

Finally, on the nuclear side, verification arrangements do exist or are being negotiated through safeguards arrangements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the framework of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and, hopefully, in the near future also as part of a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Although some delegations may find that these instruments do not work entirely to their satisfaction, or are not universally adhered to, we believe that these concerns should first be addressed in the context of the above-mentioned instruments. The United Nations expert panel and the Conference on Disarmament also seem to be appropriate forums to discuss certain aspects of the issue. The draft resolution therefore makes a reference to weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of which delegations are invited to express their views on the subject to the Secretary-General.

It is our view, however, that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms itself should not be burdened with these subjects. Trying to expand the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to weapons of mass destruction might jeopardize the functioning of this successful United Nations instrument.

As to my third and last point, the content of the present draft resolution, I should like to underline that the draft resolution has not been changed from last year's apart from some updating. The draft resolution recalls its request to Member States to provide the Secretary-General with their views on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development and also on transparency measures related to weapons of mass destruction.

The draft resolution further reiterates the request to the Secretary-General to prepare a report to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be convened in the year 2000. The report should of course take into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the views expressed by Member States and the earlier reports of the Secretary-General on the issue. My delegation believes that by proceeding in this careful manner we have the best chance of developing the Register in a consensual and productive manner.

At this stage I should not like to prejudice the advice of the expert panel, which still has to start its work. Nor do we want to pre-empt in any way the recommendations that the report of the Secretary-General to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly might contain.

I should like to thank the 85 countries that have so far co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43. Such wide support from countries of all regions gives a political signal that countries wish to promote the functioning and the further development of the Register. The participation in the Register is gradually increasing. This year, for the first time, the report includes additional information provided by Governments on procurement from national production and military holdings. These positive developments, however, do not mean that we should become complacent. The Register needs to be strengthened further and its participation increased.

My delegation, and I believe I speak also on behalf of the many co-sponsors, hopes that the draft resolution will receive at least the same wide support as did last year's. It remains our hope that we will move back, sooner rather than later, to one consensus draft resolution on this subject.

Mr. Seibert (Germany): Since this is the first time I have spoken here at this session, I should like to express my deep satisfaction at seeing you, Mr. Chairman, at the helm of the First Committee. Please be assured of the full cooperation and support of my delegation in the discharge of your duties.

I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of 42 co-sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30 entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures". I take this opportunity to thank all co-sponsors of this draft resolution. Their growing number is encouraging and will hopefully translate into broader participation in the annual reporting.

The draft resolution before us has been developed in a joint effort by the delegations of Romania and Germany. I should like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the delegation of Romania for its close and effective cooperation, which has become a good tradition. That tradition dates back to 1980, when the two countries still belonged to two different political and military alliances confronting each other. In this context, allow me to make a few more general remarks on the concept of confidence-building and transparency before addressing the content of the draft resolution.

Germany has acquired unique experience with confidence-building measures, including transparency, under most difficult security conditions. Up to 1990 Germany was divided, and the line of political and military confrontation ran through the heart of my country. It was in this very situation of deep-rooted antagonism that we started to promote and implement confidence-building measures in a cooperative manner. Romania and Germany actively contributed to the development of confidence-building measures and, in a joint effort to bridge the confrontation, promoted, *inter alia*, the idea of global transparency of military expenditures.

The historic improvement of international relations in Europe and on a global scale was associated with increasing openness, including transparency in military matters. Objective information on military policies, armaments, and armed forces activities contributed significantly to confidence-building among States, which was a crucial precondition for ending the cold war. It also paved the way for the conclusion of concrete disarmament agreements, such as that on the reduction, by half, of major weapon categories in Europe. This in turn was closely related to solving the political problems in the centre of Europe, which, *inter alia*, brought the German people reunification and self-determination. In view of this historical experience, Germany is deeply convinced that a better flow of objective information on military matters can significantly contribute to confidence-building among States and thus help create an international atmosphere in which security can be strengthened.

Despite this positive historical experience, critical questions have been put to us during the deliberations on this item in several forums, including in the course of consultations in this body. I am fully aware that transparency is not an end in itself and cannot be a substitute for removing the root causes of tension or for concrete, verifiable, balanced and non-discriminatory arms control and disarmament agreements.

However, how can States remove the political root causes of tension and conflict in a climate of distrust and suspicion? Keeping secret basic information on the quantity and nature of armament and military activities raises the level of suspicion between States, provokes arms races and thus further increases tension.

In response to the national security concerns voiced by some delegations, let me stress that transparency does not mean disclosing all military information in detail without any restrictions, nor is transparency meant as a substitute for intelligence and information-gathering for military planning purposes. Quite the contrary: transparency means laying open national military policies in general; quantitative and — to some extent also — qualitative levels of critical armaments; and armed forces activities, in order to reduce the misunderstanding of each other's intentions and to avoid a miscalculation of such activities. That is, the concept of transparency is related to that of openness. Signalling political willingness to shape international security in a cooperative manner seems to be the most important contribution of transparency in military matters to confidence-building. It shows preparedness to engage in a dialogue which allows for asking questions and giving appropriate clarifications on military capabilities and policies, as well as intentions associated with them.

While most concepts on transparency in military matters have been developed and implemented in a regional context, on a global scale the international community has moved forward slowly and has made only modest progress so far. Two global transparency measures have been adopted by United Nations Member States: the United

Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations standardized reporting system on military expenditures. While the Register reflects national data on arms exports and imports within seven specified categories of conventional weapons, the standardized reporting system on military expenditures gives a more general overview of national defence policies, in particular with respect to national spending on procurement, operating costs and research and development. My delegation wishes to underline the importance of universal adherence to both instruments and appeals to all Member States to provide reports annually to the Secretary-General.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the delegation of the Netherlands for submitting a draft resolution on transparency in armaments, contained in document A/C.1/53/L.39, which particularly deals with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Germany has co-sponsored that draft resolution and would welcome its broad support by Member States.

Let me now turn to the draft resolution before us. The United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures is a significant contribution to international confidence-building in the field of military matters. We are aware, however, that the full potential of confidence-building can be developed only in conjunction with further substantial political steps. The establishment of such an international political framework requires the steady, persistent and sometimes painstaking step-by-step effort of the international community.

The United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures is an important contribution to this objective. It fully takes into account the different political conditions in each region. It has been acknowledged by all Member States several times through the repeated adoption without a vote of previous resolutions under the same title.

These resolutions are recalled in the first and second preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution before us. In the third and sixth preambular paragraphs the draft resolution notes and welcomes the decision by many Member States to participate in the annual reporting. Regrettably, however, the participation continues to be disappointing.

It is for this reason that last year's resolution 52/32 called upon Member States to provide the Secretary-General with their views on ways and means to strengthen and broaden participation in the reporting system, including necessary changes to its content and structure. It also requested the Secretary-General to resume consultations with the relevant international bodies with a view to increased participation and to submit a report to the General Assembly on the outcome of these consultations, including appropriate recommendations.

The draft resolution before us takes up this request put forward by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session and refers to the Secretary-General's report (A/53/218) and the recommendations contained therein.

In operative paragraphs 2 and 3 the draft resolution welcomes the resumption of consultations by the Secretary-General with relevant international bodies and expresses its appreciation for the submission of the aforementioned Secretary-General's report, which contains, *inter alia*, practical recommendations on ways and means to enhance participation in the standardized reporting system. It is these recommendations that operative paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 7 seek to implement.

Operative paragraph 4 not only repeats the traditional call upon Member States to report annually their military expenditures for the latest fiscal year for which data is available, it also gives more flexibility as to the reporting format, taking into account that many States report their military expenditures regularly to other international bodies or regional organizations.

To facilitate reporting, operative paragraph 4 therefore suggests that Member States might also use as appropriate other formats developed in conjunction with similar reporting in other international or regional contexts.

Operative paragraph 5 in turn encourages relevant international bodies and regional organizations to promote transparency of military expenditures and to enhance complementarity among reporting systems, while recognizing the different conditions prevailing in every single region.

Operative paragraph 6 requests the Secretary-General to assist Member States in the annual reporting by administrative measures which are also used with regard to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, such as sending an annual note verbale along with appropriate technical instructions and in promoting international and regional symposiums and training seminars.

Operative paragraph 7 requests the Secretary-General to continue consultations with relevant international bodies with a view to ascertaining the requirements for adjusting the present instrument to encourage wider participation. The emphasis is on examining possibilities to enhance complementarity among different reporting systems and to exchange related information.

Operative paragraph 8 requests the Secretary-General to submit the report to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly with further recommendations based on the outcome of these consultations and taking into account the views of Member States. Since this approach depends to a large extent on the cooperation of Member States, operative paragraph 9 again calls upon all Member States to provide the Secretary-General with their views on ways and means to strengthen and broaden participation, including necessary changes of the content and structure of the reporting system.

It must be our common goal to prevent this valuable instrument of confidence-building, which has always been unanimously agreed upon by the community of Member States, from being undermined through neglect and, thereby, also to protect the credibility of General Assembly resolutions.

Therefore, the operative part of the draft resolution stresses the need for action and makes concrete suggestions.

Let me finally express our sincere hope that the community of Member States will be able to adopt this draft resolution by consensus, as it did in the case of similar resolutions in previous years.

Mr. Niculescu (Romania) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to join all those who have expressed their satisfaction at seeing you, Mr. Chairman, presiding over this important Committee of the General Assembly, and I assure you that the Romanian delegation will support you and help you wholeheartedly in the work of the Committee.

(*spoke in English*)

I asked to speak in order to present some of our national views on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures", which has just been so ably introduced by the representative of Germany, Ambassador Gunther Seibert, to whom we express our deep gratitude.

As a traditional co-sponsor of the draft resolution on this subject, Romania attaches great importance to this issue and believes that increasing transparency in the military field leads to greater confidence among States, in particular those belonging to the same region. Recent experience in different regions, including the Central and Eastern European one, has underlined once again that confidence remains essential to, and is an important requirement for, the maintenance of regional and international peace and stability. Strengthening confidence-building activities through a better flow of objective military information could indeed help relieve regional and international tensions and prevent misunderstandings and miscalculations that might lead to irreversible military confrontations.

My country reaffirms its firm conviction that the United Nations standardized reporting system is still valid and its implementation would be a step in reducing tensions regionally and worldwide. Increased transparency in the area of military budgets and openness in military affairs will enhance confidence among States, thereby providing an opportunity to reduce the risk of military confrontation.

Regrettably, however, participation in the United Nations reporting system in previous years was less than expected. Romania shares the concern expressed by various other delegations at such low participation. That is why we attach great importance to the call, contained in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution, upon all Member States of the United Nations to report annually, by 30 April, to the Secretary-General their military expenditure for the latest fiscal year for which data are available.

In this context, Romania welcomes the resumption of consultations initiated by the Secretary-General aimed at ascertaining the requirements for adjusting the present reporting instrument with a view to enhancing the participation of Member States. We are grateful for the report submitted by the Secretary-General following these consultations, document A/53/218, and to the recommendations contained therein. We hope for a positive outcome of this process leading to the wider involvement of Member States and a strengthening of the standardized reporting system.

At the same time, my country is encouraged by the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to reappoint a special coordinator on transparency in armaments. We believe that the consultations to be undertaken could also address the issue of the transparency of military expenditures.

Finally, I should like to thank the German delegation for its excellent cooperation in this matter and all co-sponsors of the draft resolution for their support. My delegation joins Ambassador Seibert's appeal for the draft resolution to be adopted by consensus, as has been the case with similar resolutions in previous years.

Ms. Arce de Jeannet (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.18, entitled "United Nations Disarmament Information Programme", co-sponsored by the delegations of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Monaco, Nicaragua, Peru, South Africa and Mexico. This initiative is in keeping with Mexico's traditional support for United Nations disarmament activities.

The fourth preambular paragraph of A/C.1/53/L.18 states that the re-establishment of the Department for Disarmament Affairs should lead to reinvigorating the United Nations information and outreach activities in the field of disarmament. The last preambular paragraph, and subparagraph (a) of operative paragraph 5, emphasize the expansion of electronic means, without abandoning traditional means of disseminating information.

We have welcomed the affirmation in the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/53/161 that in the next two years the Department for Disarmament Affairs will respond to the need to make better use of electronic means, greater emphasis will be laid on preparing products for the general public and cooperation will be stepped up with the Department of Public Information, as well as with other departments and bodies outside the United Nations system, which we understand to include academic institutions.

Operative paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.18 emphasizes the importance of contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for the United Nations Disarmament Information Programme in order to sustain a strong outreach programme, and invites all Member States to make contributions to the Fund. We would like to thank the 15 States that made voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund between July 1996 and July 1998, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report. However, we think that Member States should show a higher level of commitment, since the benefits of the Information Programme, including the timely publication of the United Nations Disarmament Yearbook, are obvious.

We hope that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.18 will be adopted by consensus, as were similar resolutions in previous years.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to preside over the deliberations of the First Committee during this session and to congratulate also the members of the Bureau, particularly my colleague the Rapporteur.

I have the pleasure today of introducing draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3* entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East". Such a draft resolution, as I am sure everyone is aware, has been annually adopted by the General Assembly since 1974 and adopted by consensus since 1980.

The consensus that has emerged in the General Assembly over the years with respect to this proposal and the steadfast support it has received in bilateral declarations and in various multilateral forums is no doubt clear testimony to the relevance and the viability of the concept of establishing such a zone in the Middle East.

The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East would greatly contribute to arresting the proliferation of the threat from nuclear weapons. It would strengthen the security of all States of the region and, consequently, would be deemed to be an important confidence-building measure towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

During the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly a study on effective and verifiable measures to facilitate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was commissioned by the Secretary-General as the result of a General Assembly resolution, and was presented for consideration in this Committee. The study was well received and was considered to be a useful and balanced approach to attain an important objective. In its conclusion, it is stated,

> "There ... is no doubt that the goal can be reached; it is not an idle dream." *(A/45/435, para. 175)*

It goes on to state,

> "The effort required will be great, but so will the benefits of success." [*(ibid., para. 176)*

For more than 17 years now the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone has been unanimously anticipated, a record which testifies to the overwhelming support of this objective. However, we must face the plain truth that the objective is eluding us. No concrete measures or operational measures have been taken, and no serious talks have yet been held, formally or informally, among regional parties with a view to putting into practice what all of us here seem to aspire to and preach. The reason for such failure lies squarely with Israel, the only State in the Middle East that is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Yet, and despite the general frustration over the stagnation which characterizes the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free-zone efforts, Egypt firmly supports the implementation of the resolution this body annually adopts.

But our endorsement of this draft resolution must not be construed or misinterpreted as tacit acquiescence. On the contrary, Egypt continues to be committed to the earliest establishment and implementation of the principles and provisions of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and indeed, of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction.

In a region fraught with tension, such as the Middle East the zone cannot be looked on as, *a posteriori*, a peace dividend, but as an essential confidence-building measure facilitating and leading the way towards a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Though we fully realize that peace, security and stability in the region will be achieved only when a comprehensive peace is attained, it is essential to create the necessary climate and conditions that facilitate the achievement of this objective. In our view, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone would contribute substantially in this regard.

It is our considered opinion that the time is now ripe to proceed towards the establishment of this zone. For this reason, operative paragraph 10 of the draft resolution endeavours once again to utilize the good offices of the Secretary-General to inject the required impetus into the process. It seems timely today that we seriously embark upon laying the solid foundations on which to proceed.

In this regard, the same operative paragraph requests the Secretary-General to pursue his consultations with the States of the region and other concerned parties.

I also invite attention to the eighth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 9, in which reference is made to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. This initiative aims at broadening the scope of the 1974 initiative by adding to it chemical as well as biological weapons. It should be recalled that since the announcement of this initiative by President Mubarak on 9 April 1990 — which was later encompassed by his broader initiative in June 1998 to convene an international conference to free the world from all weapons of mass destruction — the 1990 initiative has been attracting an ever-growing degree of support. The Security Council, for example, on 3 April 1991 adopted resolution 687 (1991), paragraph 14 of which stipulates that there is a need to work towards the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction.

Finally, I commend this draft resolution to the First Committee and hope that it will receive the same support given to similar resolutions in previous years and will be adopted, as previously, without a vote.

Mr. Valle (Brazil) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the countries of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — as well as Bolivia and Chile, on agenda item 71 (d), entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction". MERCOSUR is proud to be the first association of countries to have supported unanimously the signing of this Convention in Ottawa, fully aware of the commitment we were taking on to eradicate this kind of weapon that has done and continues to do so much damage.

Unfortunately, minefields containing millions of landmines are scattered through almost all regions of the world, and demining is one of the great challenges before us in the post-conflict construction of societies. Landmines are an obstacle to the economic viability of affected areas, entail tremendous human cost and have an impact on the civilian population long after a conflict has ended. In various regions, landmines imperil peacekeeping missions. United Nations peacekeeping personnel from the MERCOSUR countries have had to face the dangers inherent in these weapons, and some have even lost their lives in various parts of the world. The most regrettable thing is that women and children are killed or maimed by these hidden, indiscriminate weapons that respect no truce or ceasefire. The devastation wrought by these slow-motion weapons of mass destruction is highlighted in the study on the impact of armed conflict on children.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, adopted last year in Oslo in the framework of the Ottawa process, expresses the consensus will of the international community to totally eliminate these weapons that violate international humanitarian law. Cooperation in mine clearance and assistance to victims also received special attention in the Ottawa negotiations. The Convention thus covers the essential aspects for alleviating the suffering of peoples and paving the way for their development. In that context, it is highly significant that our region intends to become the first region in the world to declare itself free of this scourge. This objective was established in the 1996 and 1997 Organization of American States (OAS) resolutions on declaring the western hemisphere a zone free of anti-personnel landmines. Actions have also been undertaken at the highest level by the Rio Group.

At the subregional level, in the 24 July 1998 political declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a zone of peace, our Presidents agreed to advance towards establishing the region as a zone free of anti-personnel landmines.

For several years now the United Nations has been clearly focusing on this subject, as can be seen in the Security Council deliberations on mine clearance in the context of peacekeeping operations. MERCOSUR, through Uruguay, has taken part in the creation and operation of the United Nations Central Mine Action Office and the Central Mine Action Training School.

We welcome the Government of Mozambique's important initiative of offering Maputo as the site of the first meeting of the States parties to the Ottawa Convention, as well as the Convention's entry into force on 1 March 1999. The MERCOSUR countries support and will do their utmost to contribute to the ministerial meeting in Maputo scheduled for 3 May.

Mr. Earle (United States of America): It is a pleasure to return once again to the First Committee, and it is a particular pleasure to see you, Sir, in the Chair.

On behalf of the Russian Federation, the United States and the other three sponsors named in the draft resolution — Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine — as well as the additional sponsors, I am pleased to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.49, entitled "Bilateral nuclear arms negotiations and nuclear disarmament".

This draft resolution places on record the significant progress made in reducing the strategic nuclear weapons arsenals of the Russian Federation and of the United States. The signs of progress since last year's resolution on this subject include the initiative signed in September between Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin, in which the two Presidents agreed to exchange information on the ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles derived from each side's missile launch warning system. This initiative includes the possible establishment of a centre for the exchange of missile launch data operated by Russia and the United States and separate from their respective national centres. The Presidents also agreed to examine bilaterally the possibility of establishing a multilateral ballistic missile and space launch vehicle pre-launch notification regime in which other States could voluntarily participate.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.49 also welcomes the pledge made in September by the Russian Federation and the United States to remove by stages approximately 50 metric tons of plutonium from each of their nuclear weapons programmes and to convert this material so that it can never be used in nuclear weapons.

The draft resolution recognizes that much work remains to be done in this field, urges the United States and Russia to begin negotiations on a START III agreement immediately after START II enters into force and encourages them to continue their efforts to reduce their nuclear weapons and to give those efforts the highest priority.

It also welcomes the reductions made by other nuclear-weapon States and encourages them to consider appropriate measures relating to nuclear disarmament. In this way the draft resolution provides further impetus to the nuclear-weapon States to continue meeting their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.49 contains a record not of resolutions adopted or studies agreed but of substantial progress in nuclear disarmament. To wit, through the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF) we have abolished an entire class of nuclear delivery systems. The implementation of START I has led to rapid and major reductions of strategic offensive weapons, and the entry into force of START II, and then START III, will reduce Russian and American strategic weapons to still lower levels.

Russia and the United States take pride in this record of accomplishment. The bilateral negotiating forum has shown that it works and works effectively. This approach has taken us to the eve of even more drastic reductions — up to 80 per cent of the cold-war total of our respective arms. The drafters of the draft resolution, however, do not believe that satisfaction has led to complacency. The Russian Federation and the United States have set themselves ambitious goals for the future. If they are implemented in START III, another significant step will be taken towards the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

We all have a vital interest in nuclear disarmament. Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.49 recognizes that interest and encourages it in a very practical way. It deserves the support of all members of the international community, and on behalf of the Russian Federation and the United States I ask for the widest support in this body.

Mr. Yamaguchi (Japan): With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I should like to make an announcement. The list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.42, entitled "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons", is now open for signature. Delegations wishing to be sponsors of that draft resolution are kindly requested to go to the Secretariat to sign up.

Mr. Moher (Canada): Since this is the first time I have spoken this year in the First Committee, may I emphasize that it is both a pleasure and an honour to participate under your chairmanship, Sir. Canada will do its best to make your chairmanship as productive as possible.

I should like to speak to two topics, one very briefly and the other almost as briefly. The first concerns draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, dealing with the landmines Convention. I should like to recall the statement made by Mozambique in the Committee on 26 April welcoming the process that has begun to implement the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In that regard, we are pleased to confirm that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, which now has, I believe, at least 118 sponsors, is formally before the Committee for action.

Turning to the second topic, I should like formally to present to the First Committee draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.24. In doing so we note that the heading used in that document is that associated with resolution 48/75 L, originating in the 1993 session of this Committee. In response to some informal comments made to Canada since our open meeting of 22 October, Canada is requesting the Secretariat to issue a revised document with the following heading:

> "The Conference on Disarmament decision to establish, under item 1 of its agenda entitled 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament' an ad hoc committee to negotiate, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".

That, I think, will be the longest title of any draft resolution in the First Committee.

As such, the heading echoes operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, and we sincerely hope this meets the concerns expressed.

While on this part of our comments, I would like to point out that we have drawn the Secretariat's attention to two small corrections which are necessary in A/C.1/53/L.24. One is the addition of the letter "s" to the word "decision" in the third line of the third preambular paragraph. This is just factual consistency with the actual text that was agreed in Geneva. The second is in line two of operative paragraph 1: following the word "agenda" the word "entitled" was omitted in the reproduction of the text. We will be asking for those two textual corrections to be made.

In turning to the draft resolution itself, it is evident to all of us here in this room that it deals with an issue with a long and difficult history. Moreover, complex negotiations lie ahead. It is not the purpose of this draft resolution to review that history, nor to foresee or prejudge those negotiations. The draft resolution is therefore strictly a procedural one anchored firmly in the actions taken in the Conference on Disarmament and in the ad hoc committee itself as set out in its report. Thus, we are of the view that no amendments should be made to this text, since to do so would only serve inevitably to open up substantive issues better reserved for the Conference on Disarmament itself or, as the case may be, better alternatively addressed in more appropriate draft resolutions before this Committee.

That being said, Canada does consider it highly opportune for the First Committee to welcome the steps forward in the Conference on Disarmament and to encourage the continuation of that process in 1999. It is our fervent wish that this consideration on our part will be widely shared in the First Committee and that the draft resolution will be adopted without amendment and without a vote.

Finally, Canada has decided, in response to requests from a very large number of delegations in this room, to open the draft resolution for co-sponsorship and my colleague Mr. Breault is at the back of the room with the sponsorship sheet. We welcome all who wish to sign.

Mr. Dahan (France) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to take the opportunity of the introduction by Canada of the draft resolution on the Ottawa Convention to speak on this item that is of special interest in France. It seems that for three sessions now the First Committee has represented the international community's achievements on the path towards its ambitious objective of eliminating anti-personnel mines. In 1996 it endorsed the endeavour undertaken on 2 October of that same year in Ottawa; in 1997 it took note of the adoption in Oslo of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; and this year we welcome the entry into force on 1 March next of this Treaty thanks to the deposit on 16 September 1998 of the fortieth instrument of ratification, as well as the offer of the Government of Mozambique to host the first meeting of States parties.

We cannot but be impressed by the rapid succession of these stages: less than a year of preparing the Convention and barely 10 months to obtain 40 ratifications. This unusual diligence shows the shared feeling of the need to respond to an urgent situation. France deposited its instrument of ratification on 23 July 1998, thereby becoming one of the 40 States making possible the Convention's entry into force. It intends to demonstrate its full and complete determination to see the Convention implemented rapidly by co-sponsoring draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33.

Along with this political and legal process, the international community continues to mobilize in order to meet the urgent situation on the ground through determined action for demining and rehabilitation of victims.

The emphasis now placed on the humanitarian dimension might lead us to believe that with the signing of the Ottawa Convention the task has been accomplished with regard to disarmament. That is not the case at all. The objective of eliminating anti-personnel mines will be achieved only when this norm is made universal. In this regard, one should not be deceived by the impressive number of signatories. Many countries have remained behind because they are not yet in a position, for their own reasons, to join us in our approach. We can hardly ignore them, because together they represent a significant portion of the world's population, and numbered among them are major producers, exporters and users.

It is important to continue to promote vigorously the standard for the complete elimination adopted in Ottawa. This necessary effort, however, cannot in the medium or short term solve the problem of the countries to which I have just referred. Fortunately, other undertakings do exist and even though they do not aim as high as the Ottawa Convention they do attack the problem of mines.

France, which took an active part in the review of, and has ratified, Protocol II of the 1980 Convention, looks forward to its entry into force on 3 December this year. It will join fully in the consensus when the decision is taken on the draft resolution on this subject, which it has co-sponsored.

France would like to take this opportunity to express its regret over the lack of interest shown in this instrument, as demonstrated by the low number of adherences to date, almost two and a half years after its adoption. Some progress has clearly been made in the establishment of minimal measures for the gradual abandonment of the indiscriminate use of the weapons in question, especially with regard to those that have not yet been able to join the Ottawa Convention. In this context, Protocol II deserves the broadest possible support.

It will be recalled that many countries expressed their disappointment when that text was adopted, on 3 May 1996. It was seen as a compromise between security interests and humanitarian concerns and did not attack the root of the problem. While there can be no doubt as to the merit of the texts, it is clear that those reservations were also valid. It is hardly likely that the first annual conference of the States parties to Protocol II and the forthcoming Review Conference of the 1980 Convention, to be held by the year 2001, will address this state of affairs.

In view of the difficulties inherent in this issue, France, with many others, has asked for the Conference on Disarmament to make a contribution to the cause of eliminating anti-personnel mines. Many countries share this view: on 9 December 1997, by a vote of 147 to none, the General Assembly adopted resolution 52/38 H, which invites the Conference on Disarmament to intensify its efforts in the area of anti-personnel landmines.

This would seem to be the most promising way. The overwhelming majority of that institution in Geneva agreed on the need to begin negotiations with a view to reaching a ban on the transfer of anti-personnel mines. Such an agreement would represent an important stage. By contributing to drying up the markets that provide anti-personnel mines it would greatly serve the cause of the victims of mines. Moreover, this endeavour would not begin from scratch. The Ottawa Convention, especially regarding definitions, would be an indispensable reference for the Conference on Disarmament.

Along with many other countries, we are convinced that the Conference could rapidly reach an agreement. We hope — and we have noted with the greatest interest that the Secretary-General also shares in this hope — that the Conference on Disarmament will decide, when it resumes its work, to re-establish the office of special coordinator on this subject. We hope that the special coordinator will quickly be able to identify the conditions for a consensus so that once a special group has been established the negotiations can begin without delay.

Mr. Al-Hamrani (Saudi Arabia) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Since this is the first time I have spoken this year in the Committee, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman during this session. I wish also to commend your political wisdom and skills in steering the deliberations of the Committee towards the achievement of the desired outcome.

(*spoke in English*)

The lessons of history demonstrate that the balance of power can be effectively maintained by the production, possession and capability of using the latest technological innovations in the fields of strategic and tactical weapons and that the absence of the balance of power constitutes a major and insurmountable obstacle that obstructs and impedes the administration of justice, precludes the attainment of a balance of interests, compromises and jeopardizes peace and security, fails to deter aggression and is conducive to instability, chaos and human suffering and deprivation. In general, without the balance of power some States become vulnerable and exposed to international and regional encroachments that could threaten their existence with annihilation.

This theory of the realist school of thought in international relations constitutes the bedrock on the basis of which the existing international and regional strategic doctrines of nuclear deterrence were formulated.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia urges the members of the international community to seize the opportunities that are offered and facilitated by the end of the cold war and the changing international environment in order to enhance regional and international security and stability. According to the teachings of the great religion of Islam, in compliance with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, recognizing and stressing the principle of security for all in its foreign policy, and demonstrating its good intentions, the Saudi Government reiterates its previous position and calls for a balance of a different kind which can be achieved under the auspices of the United Nations and is embodied in the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East, and the elimination and dismantling of existing nuclear arsenals and delivery systems. It demands the rapid conclusion by nuclear States of a legally binding international instrument that includes a common approach and a common formula acceptable to all to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in order to maintain their territorial integrity and political independence. It demands a prohibition on the dumping of radioactive waste in the Middle East region in order to avoid the catastrophic and disastrous effects of a radiological war that would jeopardize the security of all States in the region.

The policy that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia calls for is consistent with the requirements of justice, freedom, individual initiative and human dignity, and emanates from the Saudi conviction that nuclear proliferation constitutes the highest threat and gravest danger to the future of humanity and civilization. On that basis, and instead of threatening mutually assured destruction, the Saudi Government urges all States in the region to adopt the necessary foreign policies that are wise and moderate and will ensure safety and legitimate rights for all as a just and honourable goal, and that will strive to achieve a balance between security and the interests of all in this vital region. This will give credibility to regional confidence-building measures; will contribute to the enhancement of regional and international political stability, peace, security and prosperity; will liberate economic and intellectual resources; and will support peaceful endeavours to enhance opportunities for investment and regional cooperation. In a nutshell, this positive Saudi policy deserves to occupy the supreme position on the list of international and regional strategic priorities.

Mr. Moon (Republic of Korea): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Korea, I would like to make brief comments on two draft resolutions relating to cluster 2, "Other weapons of mass destruction".

My first comment refers to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6, on the status of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. My Government attaches great importance to the early conclusion of the negotiations in the ad hoc group on the protocol aimed at introducing an effective verification regime. In this regard, my delegation supports the main thrust of the draft resolution. However, we find that one important element is missing in the current text. In our view, the broad participation of States parties in the negotiations on the Protocol is essential for achieving the crucial goal of universal adherence to the implementation of the protocol. Without universal adherence, no legal instrument relating to disarmament or weapons of mass destruction can be effective.

Without prejudice to the merits of our point, my delegation decided not to pursue it further in order not to reopen the debate on the relevant paragraph, which we think is a product of delicate compromise. In this connection, however, we understand that the current operative paragraph 3 encompasses the call by the international community on States parties that have not participated in the negotiations on the verification protocol to do so. Once again, my delegation wishes to reiterate the importance of bringing as broad a participation as possible to such negotiations.

Next I would like to turn to the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction", document A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1.

As one of the original States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), my country welcomes the progress made in this year's draft resolution that shifts its weight from status to implementation of the Convention. The content of the draft seems to us to contain the measures required by the international community to pursue, under the Convention, disarmament in the area of chemical weapons. In the context of universal adherence to the Convention, my delegation has a concern over the preambular part of the draft resolution, a concern that was appropriately expressed at the informal discussion on it.

The current third preambular paragraph provides that the General Assembly notes with satisfaction the increased number of ratifications of the CWC. While welcoming this fact, my delegation believes that the status of the CWC still falls short of the criteria for universal adherence: even major States believed to possess chemical weapons still decline to join the Convention. We are concerned at the possibility that the third paragraph may give the wrong impression that the international community is satisfied with the current tempo of States acceding to the Convention.

In this context, my delegation is of the view that the cardinal importance of universal adherence needs to be reiterated in the preambular part in conjunction with the third paragraph. This will help avoid any misunderstanding of the third paragraph. We believe that the goal of universal adherence should prevail over other principles enshrined in the Convention itself, for they cannot be upheld without the universal adherence of States to the Convention. We cannot overemphasize the objective of universal adherence in the preambular part regardless of the relevant paragraphs in the operative part of the draft.

While looking forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, my delegation wishes to put on record its legitimate concerns.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have asked to speak so as to offer some comments and some proposals with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.24, the title of which has now been revised by the representative of Canada, the principal sponsor of the draft resolution, into the longest title in the record of the General Assembly. I welcome this change because at least the new title, although elongated, reflects the factual evolution of this issue in the Conference on Disarmament.

Let me begin by stating that my delegation welcomes the resumption of the negotiations on the fissile materials treaty by the Conference on Disarmament this year, and we supported the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee during the 1998 session. Our agreement to do so was arrived at by my Government on the basis of certain understandings and expectations. We had opened a constructive dialogue on the South Asian security situation with a major Power, and it was and remains our understanding that the objectives of South Asian security and non-proliferation will be promoted through a cooperative rather than a coercive approach.

Unfortunately, since the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee in the Conference on Disarmament, and particularly since the commencement of this Committee's session, we have witnessed not a cooperative approach but a resumption of a coercive approach by the same delegation, *inter alia*, that has sponsored this draft resolution on the fissile materials treaty.

I would like to clarify here the position of my Government: in this climate of coercion, the promotion of which is sought by certain other draft resolutions in the Committee, we will be unable to continue to share in the consensus that was achieved in the Conference on Disarmament on this issue.

My delegation has always heard that the fissile materials treaty must seek to promote both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. That is not only the position of my delegation but is also the position of the General Assembly as expressed in paragraph 50 of the Final Document. That was also the position of the Canadian delegation in previous years, when it sponsored draft resolutions on the issue of a fissile materials ban. It is certainly the position of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In order to ensure that this commitment of the international community to ensure that the fissile materials treaty promotes both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, my delegation will be submitting a series of amendments to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.24. I would like to indicate at this stage the nature and content of those amendments.

Our first amendment seeks to insert a new first preambular paragraph, which would recall paragraph 50 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I), which called for the cessation in the production of fissile material for weapons purposes as part of a comprehensive phased programme leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Our second amendment would seek to add two additional preambular paragraphs after the present second preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.24. The first of these preambular paragraphs would read as follows:

> "*Notes* the continuing differences among Member States regarding the scope and objectives of the treaty".

That is a statement of fact.

The other preambular paragraph we would insert here would read as follows:

> "*Convinced* that any treaty on fissile material must constitute a disarmament measure and not only a non-proliferation measure".

These words were the words suggested by the Canadian delegation in the Conference on Disarmament in the context of the decision that was adopted with regard to this issue. Unfortunately, these words were not pressed for inclusion in this decision. We would like to see them reflected in the draft resolution in order to ensure that we all abide by the understanding that the treaty will be a disarmament treaty and not merely another non-proliferation measure.

Finally, we seek to add the following words at the end of operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.24. After the words

> "*Encourages* the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish its ad hoc committee at the beginning of the 1999 session",

we would add the following words:

> "to negotiate a fissile materials treaty which must form an integral step of a process of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework".

These are the words of the Non-Aligned Movement. They are a consensus of the majority of the membership of this Committee, and we hope that they will be reflected in the draft resolution to be adopted by the General Assembly on this important issue. I will hand these amendments to the Secretariat at the end of the meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.

United Nations

A/C.1/53/PV.20

General Assembly

Fifty-third session

Official Records

First Committee

20th Meeting

Friday, 30 October 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier . . . . (Belgium)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. González (Chile), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Statement by Romania

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before the Committee continues the second stage of its work I call on the representative of Romania, Mr. Alexandru Niculescu, who has asked to make a statement.

Mr. Niculescu (Romania): Thank you, Sir, for allowing me to make a few comments and then a statement within this context.

First, I wish to refer to agenda item 73 (d), regarding the report of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). My first comment is that Romania attaches great importance to UNIDIR activities. The last report of the Institute underlines very clearly that the work carried out by that body aims at facilitating discussions and negotiations by the international community on the issues of disarmament and international security. The studies, carried out with dedication by a small number of researchers, cover a large number of items of the disarmament agenda, especially the new one, thus providing us with a better understanding of the new challenges ahead of us. At the same time, this offers the possibility of setting a global overview and of passing beyond our national, and sometimes restrictive, perceptions.

That is why Romania believes that the international community should continue to support the activities of UNIDIR, including through adequate material assistance. It is in the interests of all of us that UNIDIR should function properly. In this regard, we welcome the efforts made by various Governments and encourage them and other countries to continue this pattern.

Now I come to a special statement. I would like to use this opportunity to clarify an issue which for too many years has clouded the situation of a distinguished United Nations civil servant, Mr. Liviu Bota, a Romanian-born citizen who is now the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Georgia. As many members may recall, in 1986, in flagrant violation of the privileges and immunities of United Nations personnel Mr. Liviu Bota, at that time Director of UNIDIR, was prevented from returning to his post in Geneva by an abusive and entirely politically motivated decision taken by the Ceaucescu dictatorial team. Moreover, in the debates of this very Committee at the forty-first session of the General Assembly, the former Permanent Representative to the United Nations of the communist regime made a number of unjustified accusations concerning Mr. Bota.

I want now officially to state that these allegations are null and void. By doing so we want not only to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Mr. Liviu Bota in the service of the United Nations but also to affirm the determination of the new democratic Romania fully to respect the principles and rules governing the status of the United Nations international civil service.

I ask that this statement be fully reflected in the records of the Committee.

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items

Mr. DuPreez (South Africa): My delegation has asked to speak to address items under cluster 4, "Conventional weapons".

The South African Government's national position on the issue of small arms and light weapons has been stated in several forums on various occasions. This position has recently been formalized in South Africa's response in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 52/38 J, in which Member States were requested to submit views on the Secretary-General's report on small arms, on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained therein and, in particular, to provide views concerning the convening of an international conference on the illicit trade of small arms in all its aspects.

The South African policy position has been circulated as document A/53/169/Add.3. As I stated during the general debate, at this session of the First Committee the South African delegation will continue to support draft resolutions dealing with conventional arms, small arms and light weapons. The devastation wrought by the proliferation of these weapons on socio-economic development generally, and specifically in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies, can no longer be ignored.

The challenge in addressing the proliferation of light weapons and small arms is to marshal the necessary human and financial resources, encourage the sharing of reliable data among national departments and regional partners, coordinate action and raise the profile of the issues to gain the support of Governments, politicians and non-governmental organizations. Furthermore, the illicit proliferation of small arms is closely linked to other criminal activities and therefore must be addressed within the context of initiatives aimed at reducing crime.

In order to avoid unnecessary duplication and the waste of valuable resources, it would be important to coordinate national, regional and international initiatives, focusing on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In this we see the United Nations playing the central role. South Africa believes that a holistic approach is necessary to address this problem. Concurrent action must be taken at national, regional and international levels, focusing on both illicit and licit transfers of small arms and light weapons. To reinforce national action it is imperative that a regional approach addressing the concerns of individual regions and adopting an incremental approach be formulated to address the problem of the uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons. This will ensure that as each region of the world develops an indigenous approach, building blocks will be put in place to effectively deal with this issue globally.

A cooperative partnership should be established between Governments, international and regional organizations and the non-governmental community to mobilize public and political support. The role of the non-governmental community in assisting Governments in achieving the support and aiding in the compilation of reliable data regarding the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects should be explored fully.

The South African delegation has for these reasons initiated a new draft resolution, A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1, entitled "Illicit traffic in small arms". It is a pleasure for me to introduce the draft resolution, which has so far been sponsored by Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Mexico, Monaco, Mozambique, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay.

The aim of the draft resolution is to strengthen the Secretary-General's efforts to provide Member States, through broad-based consultations, with a global picture of the magnitude and scope of the phenomenon of illicit trafficking in small arms. The Secretary-General's consultations should also focus on possible measures to combat illicit trafficking in and circulation of small arms, including those suited to indigenous regional approaches, and provide an assessment of the role of the United Nations in collecting, collating, sharing and disseminating information on illicit trafficking in small arms. An example of such a role could be the establishment of a database on illicit trafficking in small arms.

The result of these broad-based consultations with Member States, interested regional and subregional organizations, international agencies and experts in the field, together with the reports by the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and the study group on ammunition and explosives, will provide the necessary authoritative information to enable the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly to make a decision on the objectives and scope of an international small arms conference and to decide what more should be done to address this problem.

The draft resolution also invites Member States in a position to do so to provide the necessary assistance, bilaterally, regionally and through multilateral channels such as the United Nations, in support of the implementation of measures associated with combating illicit trafficking in and circulation of small arms.

I wish to point out a technical error in the eleventh preambular paragraph of A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1. The beginning of the paragraph should read,

> "*Underlining* the importance of increased cooperation and coordination both among the relevant intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations ...".

The rest of the paragraph continues as is. The Secretariat has assured us that this correction will be reflected in a corrigendum which will be published on Monday.

It is the belief of my delegation and the delegations of other sponsors that this draft resolution can be adopted without a vote.

South Africa's position with regard to the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, as reiterated during the Committee's general debate, is that such a conference should be held after 1999 to enable Governments and regional organizations to share their experiences and facilitate dialogue. The aim of the conference should be to increase cooperation and to avoid duplication of initiatives to ensure that scarce resources are utilized effectively. The conference should formulate an action plan to combat this proliferation problem based upon the experiences of indigenous regional approaches in this regard. Such regional approaches will have put in place measures which would allow us effectively to deal with this issue globally.

Given the magnitude of the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and the urgent need to address this problem, South Africa, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, entitled "Small arms", supports the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, not later than 2001. However, in order for such an international conference to achieve practical results, preparations at the national, regional and international levels would be imperative, taking into account the views of Member States, regional and subregional organizations, international agencies and experts in the field. It is therefore my Government's firm belief that the preparatory process for this conference should commence only after a decision taken at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly based on the views of Member States on the objective, scope, agenda, dates and venue, and taking into account the 1997 report of the Secretary-General on small arms, as well as the recommendations made by the Group of Governmental Experts established under the terms of General Assembly resolution 52/38 J, to be submitted to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

While welcoming the offer made by the Government of Switzerland to host the conference, we do not consider this offer to exclude or prejudge the consideration of any other such offers, particularly from those parts of the world in which the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons are most prevalent.

The scale of the landmine problem in Africa and the challenge it poses on a continent with limited resources and great development needs is of equal concern to my Government. The entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, as well as the fulfilment and implementation of all the objectives of the treaty, have been and will continue to be a priority for South Africa. It is for this reason that South Africa has given its full support to the offer made by Mozambique to host the first conference of States parties. By holding this meeting in one of the countries that has been most afflicted by the scourge of anti-personnel landmines, the meeting will serve as a further reminder to all members of the international community of how these weapons are devastating the lives of innocent civilians around the world.

Given its strong support for the treaty, as well as for the convening of the conference in Maputo during May 1999, South Africa and 39 other African Member States have already co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction". South Africa will work closely and actively with Mozambique and other members of the treaty to encourage those States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify it so that they too can join us in Maputo as full members of the international norm against the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction.

South Africa is also a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.20, entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects" — the so-called CCW. As a State party to that Convention, and in particular to amended Protocol II and Protocol IV of the Convention, my Government remains committed to the earliest possible implementation of these Protocols. The entry into force of Protocol IV earlier this year and the forthcoming entry into force of amended Protocol II on 3 December 1998, are welcome steps towards prohibiting the use of weapons which cause excessively injurious or indiscriminate effects. However, we continue to call on all high contracting parties to the Convention which have not yet done so, as well as States not parties to the Convention, to take all measures possible to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols.

South Africa, as in similar cases in the past, will also support draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them", as proposed by Mali. We trust that the draft resolution on this subject will once again be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): The unlawful and uncontrolled use of small arms is a problem that affects almost every country. At the global level we know that far more people are killed by the use of small arms than by tanks or bombs. Small arms are weapons increasingly used as a primary instrument of violence in armed conflicts and in criminal activities, and account for the greatest percentage of deaths, particularly among non-combatants.

There are also legal and legitimate weapons used by States for legitimate purposes, yet their excessive accumulation, dissemination and availability exacerbate and even trigger violence and destabilize societies. Their control and destruction has become a central issue in conflict resolution, peace-building and disarmament.

The task ahead of us is demanding. The control of small arms and light weapons goes beyond the traditional instruments of disarmament and arms control. It is much more complex. In fact, arms control is only one dimension of the problem. Therefore, a comprehensive, integrated and phased approach is needed. Concurrent actions must be taken at national, regional and international levels. A number of welcome diplomatic initiatives to control the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled use of small arms have now been launched, particularly at the regional level.

In this context, I would like to stress the innovative nature of the European Union code of conduct, which sets high standards for arms exports and also provides for a consultation mechanism. Further measures on small arms are now being considered by the European Union in the framework of its common policy. We must of course pursue complementarity and avoid duplication. In this context, we welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to establish the mechanism to coordinate all action on small arms within the United Nations system — Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA). A strong role for the United Nations on the small arms issue is in the interests of us all.

It is now necessary to identify a common and unifying objective and to agree on an agenda. We welcome the decision to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, not later than 2001, as well as the offer of the Government of Switzerland to host it. We consider that the aim of such a conference should be precisely to broaden the common international understanding of the concrete actions required to address this problem. Further discussion will certainly be needed concerning the objectives, scope, agenda, date and venue of the international conference. We should secure broad international support and a clear understanding of the focus of the exercise. While the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms is not the preparatory committee of the international conference, we do believe that careful consideration should be given to its work and recommendations.

In concluding, I would like to reiterate my delegation's total support for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13, prepared under the leadership of Japan, and draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1, "Small arms", prepared under the leadership of South Africa and just introduced by the representative of South Africa. We co-sponsored these two draft resolutions and we hope they will gain consensus in the Committee.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): I have pleasure in introducing today, under agenda item 71 (e), the draft resolution submitted by Jordan, Myanmar, the Niger, Nigeria, the

Sudan, Swaziland and my own delegation, Egypt, entitled "Transparency in armaments", document A/C.1/53/L.39.

Egypt has always been a supporter of transparency in armaments and considers that transparency in all fields of armaments represents a positive step and a solid confidence-building measure leading to a safer and more stable world. To arrive at this objective, Egypt participated in all panels of governmental experts set up following the adoption of the founding resolution 46/36 L, chaired the very first and pioneering ad hoc committee on transparency in armaments at the Conference on Disarmament and also coordinated the work of the Group of 21 on this issue.

Egypt considers that transparency must apply to conventional weapons as well as to weapons of mass destruction. It must also apply to military holdings and procurement through national production. However, as Egypt and the rest of the non-aligned States have been stressing every year, the concept of transparency should not be limited only to conventional weapons but should also include weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological — as well as transfers of high technology with military applications.

Egypt entered into consultations with other parties in order to reflect these principles in the provisions of the text of the draft resolution. Before that we showed our good faith by reporting in 1993 our exports and imports of 1992 amid promises that the expansion of the Register would be possible following an agreement in the first group of governmental experts. When that became impossible, Egypt decided not to block the report, but our experts registered Egypt's position officially on 26 August 1993.

It is for this reason that Egypt, among other sponsors, at the last session of the General Assembly decided to introduce a draft resolution under agenda item 71 (c), "Transparency in armaments". The objective was not to undermine the traditional draft resolution presented by the Netherlands, which we hold in great esteem, but was aimed at complementing such efforts by presenting a draft text that deals with those aspects of the transparency issue that have not been adequately dealt with, nor reflected in the later three panels of experts.

In our draft resolution this year we are urging Member States to submit their views to the Secretary-General for the elaboration of practical means for the further development of registers in order to increase transparency related to weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, to the transfer of equipment and technology directly related to the development and manufacture of such weapons, and to high technology with military applications, for consideration by the governmental group of experts to be convened in the year 2000.

The support received for the Egyptian draft last year, and in particular the 98 votes in favour, is indeed tangible testimony to the fact that Egypt is not the only country concerned about the selective way in which the transparency issue has been handled so far, and hence we hope that this year the draft will enjoy even larger and more overwhelming support.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): I should like briefly to draw the attention of the members of the Committee to the draft resolution on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status, document A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1, introduced by my delegation yesterday. Since the introduction of the draft resolution several delegations have expressed their interest in co-sponsoring it. In this connection, I would like to inform the Committee that interested delegations are more than welcome to do so by signing the register of sponsorship with the Secretariat.

Mr. Valle (Brazil) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Brazil, speaking on behalf of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and the associated countries of Bolivia and Chile, wishes to avail itself of this opportunity to emphasize how important we think it is to adopt appropriate measures to regulate the international maritime transport of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel in accordance with the highest international standards of safety. Our interest stems from our constant and well-justified concern about the obvious risks that such transport poses to the health of inhabitants and the marine environment of the coastal States in the regions through which the transit occurs.

We wish to reiterate the concepts contained in the joint declaration that the Foreign Ministries of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay issued on 17 January 1997, which was circulated as an official document of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We wish to recall that the norms of international law and national legislation give coastal States jurisdiction over the protection and preservation of the marine environment in their respective exclusive economic zones with a view to preventing, reducing and controlling the contamination of those areas.

We also wish to reiterate that in the competent international organizations it is necessary to step up regulation of the transport of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, through, *inter alia*, guarantees on non-contamination of the marine environment, exchange of information on routes chosen, mandatory provision of information to coastal States on contingency plans in case of accidents in international maritime transport, the commitment to recover radioactive waste in case of accidents involving ships transporting such waste, and the payment of compensation in cases of injury and damage.

We welcome the adoption in 1997 of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. However, we do not believe that the Convention pays sufficient attention to transboundary transportation, and we continue to support the efforts that are being made in the IAEA to adopt and improve upon international instruments and regulations on the safety of transport of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel. We completely support resolution 13 on this subject, adopted on 25 September 1998 at the forty-second regular session of the General Conference of the IAEA. We wish to emphasize the importance we attach to operative paragraphs 2, 4 and 6, which explicitly refer to regulating the safe transport of radioactive material and call upon States dispatching radioactive material to supply to potentially affected States that so request appropriate guarantees that their regulations that take into account the Agency's regulation of transportation and information relevant to the transport of radioactive material. In addition, with a view to safeguarding the safety and health of our populations and environment, we believe that efforts should be continued to encourage the adoption of machinery that will provide sufficient guarantees to all States concerned regarding the use of the strictest possible safety measures for the international maritime transport of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, as well as regarding reparations for damage caused by any accidents in this connection.

We wish to emphasize the article dealing with notification and prior consent of the transit State, as stipulated in the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Wastes and their Disposal and in the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Code for the Safe Carriage of Irradiated Nuclear Fuel. I wish to recall that the Final Declaration of the fifth meeting of representatives of States members of the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, held in Buenos Aires from 21 to 22 October 1998, called upon member States to continue their efforts to achieve appropriate measures to govern the maritime transport of radioactive and toxic waste, taking into account the interests of coastal States, and especially in accordance with the standards of the IMO and the IAEA. We believe that the progress that we can make in this connection will redound to the benefit both of coastal States and of those States involved in the international maritime transport of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel, as this will make it possible to coordinate and adopt the necessary safeguards in case of accidents. We believe that any progress relating to the prevention of such accidents will be duly appreciated by the international community.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): It is a great pleasure for me once again to introduce in the First Committee the draft resolution under the agenda item entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", contained in document A/C.1/53/L.32/Rev.2, on behalf of the following sponsors: Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Morocco, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The regular submission by the group of sponsors of a draft resolution on this subject reflects the support and the shared will of the States of the Mediterranean basin and of Europe to turn our region into a zone of peace, security and cooperation, thereby making the Mediterranean Sea a genuine sea of peace. In recent years, Mediterranean and European States have embarked on a process of a dialogue of partnership by intensifying their joint efforts to promote and consolidate peace and security in the region and to lay the basis for multifaceted cooperation and partnership, the ultimate objective of which is the prosperity and stability of the countries of the Mediterranean as a whole.

It should be recalled that after the Euro-Mediterranean Conference held in Barcelona in 1995, which laid the foundation for the new relations between the two shores of the Mediterranean, the second Euro-Mediterranean Conference, held in Valetta in April 1997, provided a propitious opportunity for an assessment of the process and for giving the necessary political momentum to that partnership.

In the context of the efforts undertaken through consultation and dialogue between the two shores of the Mediterranean, the ministerial meeting of the

Mediterranean forum, held in Algiers in July 1997, provided a complementary framework for strengthening consultation and dialogue even further.

The draft resolution that the co-sponsors are submitting to the Committee, like the draft resolution submitted last year, tries to be concise and to avoid repetition in its focus on the essential aspects of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean. In substance and form it does not differ at all from resolutions adopted at previous sessions, and in particular from the last resolution adopted by the General Assembly on this item, resolution 52/43 of December 1997.

The preambular part of the draft resolution recalls the initiative undertaken by the countries of the region to consolidate peace, security and cooperation, and stresses the responsibility of all States to contribute to stability and prosperity in the Mediterranean region and their commitment to respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The preambular part also recognizes the indivisibility of all aspects of security in the region.

In operative paragraphs 1 and 2 the draft resolution reiterates certain fundamental principles, and in operative paragraph 4 stresses the need to eliminate economic and social disparities among the States of the Mediterranean basin and to promote mutual respect and greater understanding among cultures in order to strengthen peace, security and cooperation among the countries of the region.

As regards disarmament, the draft resolution calls upon all States of the region that have not yet done so to adhere to all the multilaterally negotiated legal instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation. Similarly, States are encouraged to promote openness and transparency.

Lastly, all the States of the region are invited to cooperate in all fields in order to address terrorism, international crime and the illicit production and trafficking of drugs and weapons, which jeopardize friendly relations among States, hinder development and international cooperation and destroy human rights, fundamental freedoms and the democratic bases of a pluralistic society.

The sponsors I have enumerated are confident that the draft resolution on this subject, contained in document A/C.1/53/L.32/Rev.2, which fits more within the framework of international security than that of disarmament, will continue to have the support of all members of the Committee and will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Seibert (Germany): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, the draft resolution entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures". The draft resolution is sponsored by 64 Member States the names of which are listed in document A/C.1/53/L.31/Rev.1. We attach particular importance to the fact that the sponsorship bridges the usual regional group lines and involves Member States from virtually all regions of the globe. I should like to express special thanks to all of them.

The draft resolution "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures" was first introduced by our delegation in 1996, resulting in the adoption of resolution 51/45 N. Sponsored by 42 countries, it was adopted by the General Assembly without a vote and later included in the ongoing deliberations of the Disarmament Commission.

As reiterated in the second preambular paragraph of this year's draft resolution, its basic idea is to focus the First Committee's attention in a more integrated manner on the relevance of certain practical disarmament measures for the consolidation of peace in post-conflict environments. As experience has shown, such measures as arms control, particularly with regard to small arms and light weapons, confidence-building, demobilization, reintegration of former combatants, demining and conversion are often prerequisites for maintaining and consolidating peace and security and thus for providing a basis for effective rehabilitation and socio-economic development in areas that have suffered from conflict. That scope of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N remains unchanged in the new draft.

As with last year's resolution 52/38 G, sponsored by no fewer than 63 delegations, the present draft resolution explicitly refers to new developments that have taken place since the first resolution. First, it notes with satisfaction, in the third preambular paragraph, that the importance of practical disarmament measures has received growing recognition from the international community in many respects.

Secondly, the Disarmament Commission agreed in 1997 on a conventional item which explicitly referred to General Assembly resolution 51/45 N and thus included it directly in its deliberations on future guidelines on this item. These deliberations, according to the usual practice, will continue for a total of three sessions of the Disarmament Commission. As a consequence, reference to Disarmament Commission proceedings was again given a prominent place in the draft resolution. Members will find this in the fifth preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 1. In the Disarmament Commission discussions on this item during the past two years we have had, in our view, a lively and fruitful exchange of views which serves as a useful basis for further deliberations and will hopefully lead to the adoption of such guidelines in 1999.

Last year's resolution took note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Consolidation of Peace through Practical Disarmament Measures", submitted pursuant to resolution 51/45 N. We make reference once again to that report in operative paragraph 2 of this year's draft resolution and encourage Member States, as well as regional arrangements and agencies, to lend their support to the implementation of recommendations contained therein.

In paragraph 12 of his report the Secretary-General expressed his view that the readiness of the international community to assist affected States in their efforts to consolidate peace would greatly benefit the effective implementation of practical disarmament measures. He also stated that he would wish to see the establishment of a group of interested States in order to facilitate this process and to build upon the momentum generated. As members all know, this group of interested States was formed in New York in March 1998, under our chairmanship, in an effort to strengthen international cooperation in this field and to promote concrete projects of practical disarmament, especially those undertaken by affected States themselves.

The efforts made by this group have had a considerable impact. Since March three concrete projects have emerged: first, a train-the-trainers seminar for military experts from Central African States was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in July this year; secondly, in two weeks there will be a workshop in Guatemala to elaborate a policy study based on lessons learned from the collection of arms, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants in Central America; and a third project, introduced by Albania, calls for assistance in creating incentives for a programme to get large numbers of the civilian population in Albania to turn in their weapons. Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala conducted a fact-finding mission to the country last May. A first pilot project will be presented as soon as the current evaluation process is concluded. This year's draft resolution keeps up this momentum and wants to build upon the progress achieved so far. We want to encourage the group's work, and therefore operative paragraph 3 the draft resolution invites the group of interested States to continue its work.

In this context, I draw attention to the fact that practical disarmament measures have particular relevance with respect to the growing problems arising from the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. They pose a serious threat to national and regional peace and security and reduce the prospects for economic development in many affected regions, particularly in post-conflict situations. It in this field in particular that the Secretary-General is requested by affected Member States to assist in collecting and destroying small arms and light weapons that are not under control and are not needed for the legitimate security purposes of the concerned States. That is why in operative paragraph 4 we encourage the Member States, including the group of interested States, to lend their support to the Secretary-General in responding to such requests. In doing so, we also implement one important recommendation contained in the Secretary-General's report of 27 August 1997 on small arms, document A/52/298, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its 1997 session. It reads:

> "The United Nations should support, with the assistance of the donor community, all appropriate post-conflict initiatives related to disarmament and demobilization, such as the disposal and destruction of weapons, including weapons turn-in programmes sponsored locally by governmental and non-governmental organizations". (*A/52/298, para. 79 (b)*)

With these basic explanatory remarks I put this draft resolution before the Committee. Extensive consultations with sponsors and with other delegations were conducted prior to the submission of the draft resolution in an effort again to secure consensus on it. In keeping with this tradition, I trust that the draft resolution will again be adopted without a vote. We invite all delegations to join in the consensus on this draft resolution.

Mr. Vinhas (Portugal): The concept of practical disarmament, which was first introduced by former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his Agenda for Peace, has been given increased attention by both Member States and the international community as well as by the Secretary-General in his reform programme. This reflects the fact that in most conflict and post-conflict environments questions of the control of small arms and light weapons, demining, demobilization and the reintegration of former combatants are increasingly considered to be crucial for effective conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation. The post-conflict disarmament component has to be addressed realistically when we engage in conflict resolution so that we may have a durable peace. We mention this in order to permit a proper assessment of the merits of the draft resolution entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", which effectively links the concept of some disarmament aspects with the concept of conflict resolution.

In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 52/38 G, a group of interested States was established this year under the leadership of Germany to facilitate the process of assisting affected countries in their efforts to consolidate peace. Within the framework of that group we have been dealing with concrete efforts in practical disarmament by jointly sponsoring concrete projects upon request by affected countries. In doing so, the group is taking a major step from the merely conceptual to having a real impact. The group has already sponsored two projects, and my Government was particularly pleased to have made a financial contribution to the first project supported by the group, the train-the-trainers workshop which took place in Yaoundé in July. We would like to encourage the group of interested States to continue its very valuable work, wishing that we could move from the discussion of practical disarmament — seminars, workshops, and so on — to more concrete and practical projects.

Portugal once again fully supports the draft resolution entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", just introduced by the Ambassador of Germany, and we particularly welcome the reference to small arms and light weapons in operative paragraph 4, widening the conceptual scope of the mandate of the group of interested States in order to include more ambitious objectives.

Mr. Hoey (Ireland): I have asked for the floor to speak in support of the draft resolution which the Ambassador of Germany has just introduced. My delegation attaches particular importance to this draft resolution because it focuses on one of the most important aspects of the problems posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, namely, the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach towards certain practical disarmament measures.

I want to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to Germany for the initiative it has taken in once again presenting us with a valuable draft resolution and for its untiring efforts in ensuring that the draft resolution can, like previous ones on this subject, be adopted by consensus. In my delegation's view, this is a clear signal from the General Assembly of the importance we all attach to this subject.

My delegation also wishes to renew its thanks to Germany for bringing together the group of interested States here in New York to discuss the implications of, and lessons learned from, disarmament and peace-building initiatives in the areas of conflict. Ireland was particularly pleased to be able to make a financial contribution to a subregional seminar on the training of trainers for practical disarmament measures held in Yaoundé earlier this year. The value of meetings of this group is that they allow Member States in which practical disarmament measures or peace-building projects are being planned to take the lead in the design and implementation of these initiatives. We firmly believe that this is the only way that the success and effectiveness of such projects can be guaranteed.

There are an increasing number of regional and subregional initiatives being undertaken in relation to small arms and light weapons, both licit and illicit. We warmly welcome these and commend those Member States which are actively participating in them. They make an important contribution to the way in which we address the uncontrolled accumulation of these weapons and help us measure more accurately the impact which they have on countries that are trying to rebuild their societies, infrastructures and economies in the aftermath of conflict.

However, we also believe that the United Nations has an equally important role to play in addressing certain aspects of what is an extremely complex question. That is why we value the work that the United Nations Disarmament Commission is currently engaged in, and we look forward to the successful adoption next year of a set of practical guidelines under the agenda item on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace. Annex IV of the report of the Disarmament Commission, which is being presented to this Committee, contains the paper presented by the Chairman of the Working Group, the Ambassador of Uganda, Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka. As Chairman of the Group, he constantly reminded us of the enormous importance of the task we had set ourselves and encouraged us to keep our focus clear on what the objectives were. He has left us with a useful report containing all the essential elements, a report on which, with the characteristic goodwill and cooperation that characterize so much of the work of the Disarmament Commission, it should certainly be possible next year to reach consensus. My delegation will work actively to that end.

Mr. Reimaa (Finland): I wish to address the question of small arms. Finland is a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13, prepared under the leadership of Japan, and of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41, prepared under the leadership of South Africa. Allow me also in this context reaffirm our full support for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.31, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", which was introduced a few minutes ago by my German colleague.

The adoption of these draft resolutions will demonstrate the readiness and determination of the Member States of the United Nations to address the acute problem of small arms in a comprehensive and effective manner. My Minister, in her statement to the General Assembly on 22 September, underlined the importance Finland attaches to finding sustainable solutions to the small arms problem.

The issue of small arms touches the lives of too many people around the world. These weapons are the kind actually being used in conflicts. They are used in crime. Civilians, often women and children, are the victims in nine cases out of 10. Dealing with the issue requires practical disarmament, law enforcement and a recognition of the link between security and development.

The draft resolutions firmly recognize the broader context. It is within that context that they have a particular focus on one aspect of the problem: the illicit arms trade. These draft resolutions complement each other. The decision in operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13 to hold an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects is an important new step forward. This decision should be followed through with thorough preparation, mindful of the need to avoid duplication of the work of other bodies of the United Nations, in particular, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

The basic guidelines for holding such a conference have already been provided in the Secretary-General's report in document A/52/298, containing the recommendations that were made last year by the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms. We look to the recently established new Group of Governmental Experts to build upon the results already achieved and to provide substantive recommendations concerning the objective, scope and agenda for such a conference, among its other recommendations.

The input by the Group of Governmental Experts, together with additional views of Member States, should make it possible for the next session of the General Assembly to launch the formal preparatory process of the conference. Finland thanks Switzerland for its generous offer and supports the holding of the conference in Geneva.

The issue of the illicit arms trade, as part of the bigger problem of small arms and light weapons, requires a multifaceted approach. The work done by the Group of Governmental Experts has already illustrated the complexity of the questions the international community is facing in this context. The efforts made in the various international forums should complement one another. For example, the key principles and rules of behaviour relevant to addressing the small arms issue could be dealt with and developed on a global basis. More concrete measures should be undertaken at regional, national and even local levels.

Some measures, such as information exchange and legally binding cooperation, are best dealt with through regional or subregional cooperation, including through organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Some measures by their very nature would need to be tailored to each particular situation — for instance, to prevent the spread of weapons or an outbreak of violence, or as part of post-conflict peace-building efforts.

In our view, international cooperation should be aimed, above all, at finding practical solutions for the real world; at preventing the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and proliferation of small arms; and at solving problems caused by the use of these weapons in mostly internal conflicts.

The small arms problem is not just about creating new international norms but, more importantly, about full compliance with relevant international norms, including the laws of war and respect for human rights, including respect for minority rights. The accumulation, proliferation and use of small arms in geographical areas of past or present conflict have a direct bearing on development, and therefore on development assistance by donor nations as well. We hope that the work that is being undertaken within the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) will for its part take into account, more fully than heretofore, the relationship between development, security and small arms. An integrated approach is needed to place the small arms problem into the wider context of sustainable development and conflict prevention. The donor community's efforts are a crucial complement to local, national and regional efforts to effectively address the problem of small arms.

Given the horizontal nature of the issue, proper coordination of various international activities is essential. We welcome the establishment of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) within the Secretariat. A strong role for the United Nations on the small arms issue is in the interests of all of us.

Mr. Soutar (United Kingdom): On 16 October I had the honour, as President of the Conference on Disarmament, to present to this Committee the report of the Conference on its 1998 session. It is now my duty to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12, on the report of the Conference.

This is the traditional vehicle by which the General Assembly takes note of the work of the Conference. For that reason the draft resolution follows a well-tried formula. Members of the Committee will no doubt have noted that the preambular paragraphs are identical to those of last year's resolution on this subject. Of the operative paragraphs, paragraphs 1, 2, 8, 9 and 10 are identical to the corresponding paragraphs in last year's resolution.

Operative paragraph 3 welcomes the setting up of two ad hoc committees during the 1998 session, while operative paragraph 4 welcomes the institution of presidential consultations on agenda item 1 during the 1998 session. Operative paragraph 5 refers to the inter-sessional work requested in paragraph 48 of the report of the Conference on Disarmament.

Delegations have pointed out to me that the draft resolution has departed from the exact wording used in that report and also used in the corresponding resolution last year. I shall be happy to arrange for an appropriate correction to be made.

Operative paragraphs 6 and 7 refer to the Conference's review of its membership and of its agenda and working methods, respectively.

As I pointed out in my statement on 16 October, the report of the Conference on Disarmament reflects the fact that after a period of reflection in 1998 the Conference re-embarked on substantive negotiations on two important issues. The draft resolution now before the Committee acknowledges that fact and looks forward to a resumption of productive work in 1999.

In conclusion, I should like to express the hope that, like draft resolutions of previous years, this draft resolution can be adopted without a vote.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.

United Nations

A/C.1/53/PV.21

General Assembly

Fifty-third Session

Official Records

First Committee

21st Meeting
Monday, 2 November 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier . . . . (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The Committee will continue and conclude this afternoon the second stage of its work. Before calling on the first speaker on my list I should like to point out that before the end of the meeting I intend to remind everyone of the rules of procedure to be applied during the voting that will start tomorrow.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 entitled "Nuclear disarmament" on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own country.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 is the traditional draft resolution that we have tabled at the annual sessions of the General Assembly every year since 1995. The wide support for L.47 on such an important issue as nuclear disarmament is reflected in its sponsorship which, at this time of introducing the draft resolution, stands at 51. If sponsorship is growing further, so is the support for the draft resolution among Member States.

The resolution adopted as 50/70 P at the fiftieth session in 1995 was the first to introduce, *inter alia*, the concept of a phased programme of reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the concept of the need to commence multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in parallel with and complementary to bilateral negotiations, and the concept of de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons. These three main concepts together with other proposed important interrelated measures form the core of L.47.

The strength of L.47 lies in the following characteristics: its comprehensiveness; its reflection of the position of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries, which form approximately two-thirds of the overwhelming majority of the entire membership of the United Nations; its vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world through the implementation of a phased programme of nuclear disarmament; and its flexibility.

Comprehensiveness is a crucial requirement of any serious proposal for nuclear disarmament and for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The inclusion of a phased programme of reduction of nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination is a distinctive characteristic of draft resolution L.47. It also outlines other

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important interrelated measures of nuclear disarmament and is therefore more comprehensive than other draft resolutions on the same subject before the First Committee. In our view, any proposal for nuclear disarmament that does not outline a phased programme of reduction of nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination will be incomplete.

We believe that two other elements are essential in any serious proposal for nuclear disarmament. One is the complete cessation of the qualitative improvement and the production of nuclear weapons, or the complete cessation of the nuclear-weaponization programme. That is important because if this element is not there its absence will leave a very serious loophole in the proposal for a programme for nuclear disarmament. Such a loophole would allow the nuclear-weapon States to manufacture more precise and more effective new nuclear weapons while dismantling all obsolete ones.

Another essential element is de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons. As all of us are aware, until and unless there are changes in the perceptions and nuclear doctrines of the nuclear-weapon States, there cannot be positive changes in their negotiating stances, which changes we are very much seeking at present. Draft resolution L.47 highlights the need for de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons and for reviewing and revising the nuclear doctrines of nuclear-weapon States accordingly. Without these two elements any proposal for nuclear disarmament will be incomplete. These two elements also form the distinctive features of L.47.

Of a number of draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament before the Committee, L.47 represents the views of NAM. The draft resolution is not a NAM draft, though, but is the draft resolution of Myanmar and the other sponsors. We believe that it is important to project the positions of the NAM countries and the overwhelming majority of the non-nuclear-weapon States on this crucial subject in the First Committee. At this point in time there may still be differences in the positions of the nuclear-weapon States and some like-minded countries on the one hand and those of the NAM countries on the other. Is it not in the nature of disarmament endeavours that differences exist among countries, or groups of countries, at the early stages of the process. We overcome them through mutual accommodation as we move along in our discussions and negotiations.

We are mindful of the fact that the First Committee, unlike the Conference on Disarmament, is a deliberative forum where the Member States project their political positions with a view to giving an impetus to disarmament negotiations in both a bilateral and multilateral context. For this reason we are trying to project here in this Committee the positions of the overwhelming majority of Member States and the aspirations of the international community. We wonder whether it is really appropriate in this forum to present a watered-down version of the positions of a group of countries until and unless we are sure that by so doing we can arrive at a consensus draft resolution. Such a watered-down version rather may run into strong opposition from the nuclear-weapon States and some like-minded countries instead of achieving consensus or near-consensus on the subject in the Committee. That is why we are trying in L.47 to reflect the positions of the NAM countries and the overwhelming majority of non-nuclear United Nations Member States in a comprehensive and realistic manner rather than presenting a watered-down version of our positions.

Reflecting as it does the positions and views of the overwhelming majority of Member States, L.47 has a vision, the vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world, to be achieved through the implementation of a phased programme of reductions of nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination, and other related measures as specified in the draft resolution.

Another important characteristic of L.47 is its flexibility. If one looks at the evolution of the draft resolution since its first appearance in 1995, one will notice the degree of flexibility shown by its sponsors. One will also note that L.47 now encompasses formulations that are much more moderate. Draft resolution L.47 has also embraced new measures and practical steps such as de-alerting and de-activating nuclear weapons and the concept of no first-use threats, which have now assumed greater currency and relevance with the passage of time.

Preferred positions of the NAM countries are of course also reflected in L.47. I wish to stress here that they are not offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis. We are quite flexible on these matters. Of course, flexibility has to be mutual, and the nuclear-weapon States do need to show flexibility on their part.

In conclusion, I should like to note with satisfaction that since the first appearance of the draft resolution in 1995 there has been a perceptible upsurge of interest in and support for nuclear disarmament. There have been more discussions on nuclear disarmament, with spirited and sharp exchanges of views at times, than on any other subject being debated in the First Committee this year. More and more proposals are coming forward on this subject; more and more countries are dedicating their efforts to the cause of nuclear disarmament. I hope that L.47 will, in its humble way, give an impetus to these commendable endeavours and to the cause of nuclear disarmament. I should also like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to those Member States that have given overwhelming support to the draft resolution at previous sessions. We hope that once again they will give their overwhelming support to L.47 at this year's session as well.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): While the traditional focus of disarmament has been placed on weapons of mass destruction, we cannot ignore the fact that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has brought devastation and misery to a greater extent. The implications of the accumulation of such arms and weapons are quite far-reaching. They have negative effects on socio-economic development and on reconstruction in post-conflict situations. Moreover, the indiscriminate use of small arms and light weapons seriously constrains regional disarmament programmes such as the demobilization of ex-combatants and reductions in military-industrial complexes.

The close nexus between the illicit proliferation of small arms and other criminal activities clearly underscores the focus to be placed on small arms and light weapons. My delegation feels that a holistic approach is necessary to address the problems brought about by unchecked proliferation of and easy accessibility to small arms. Concurrent endeavours at both regional and international levels should be made to curb the flow of arms.

We appreciate the sincere efforts undertaken by the United Nations in creating awareness among the peoples of the world about the evil consequences of small arms and light weapons. Nepal welcomes the report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms, whose recommendations merit our support. As the report has clearly suggested, small arms may not create conflicts themselves, but their excessive accumulation, low cost and easy transportation contribute immensely to the exacerbation of conflicts by increasing the lethality and duration of the violence. Additionally, the report refers to the excessive and destabilizing levels of small arms and light weapons, as they have no agreed norms and standards to determine their limitations. We are encouraged by the decision of the Secretary-General to establish the mechanism for Coordinating Action on Small Arms with a view to establishing coordination regarding the issues of small arms and light weapons, including their illicit manufacturing and trafficking, both among the relevant bodies of the United Nations and within the United Nations Secretariat.

Studies made so far of the implications of small arms and light weapons indicate that such weapons have been increasingly used as primary instruments of violence in international conflicts dealt with by the United Nations. We are pleased to take note of the regional seminar devoted to small arms which was held in Kathmandu last year in cooperation with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, and which in our opinion has made a very useful contribution to mobilizing public support for stopping the proliferation of small arms. Nepal welcomes and looks forward to the early convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all aspects. We are grateful for Switzerland's offer to host this conference, possibly in 2001.

My delegation is convinced that illicit trafficking in and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons should be prevented. Some noteworthy steps have been taken in this area. The moratorium placed by the Economic Community of West African States on trade in and the manufacture of small arms and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials are both pioneering initiatives. We recognize, however, that far greater concerted efforts are needed. In this connection Nepal would also welcome an in-depth United Nations study on the feasibility of restricting the manufacture of and trade in such weapons strictly to selected manufacturers and dealers authorized by States.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): Ambassador Henrique Valle would very much like to have been here but he had another commitment so he asked me to convey this message in the name of Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) countries.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

On behalf of the delegations of the countries that belong to MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and of the delegations of the associated States, Bolivia and Chile, I should like to refer, under the sub-item "Regional disarmament", to the Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a Zone of Peace, which was signed on the occasion of the fourteenth presidential summit, held in Ushuaia on 24 July 1998.

In the context of the Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile, the parties have agreed: to declare MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a zone of peace, free of weapons of mass destruction; to state that peace is essential to the continuity and development of MERCOSUR's integration process; to strengthen existing mechanisms for consultation and cooperation among its members on security and defence issues and to promote their growing linkages, as well as to further cooperation in the areas of security- and confidence-building measures and promote their implementation; to support at the relevant international forums the full entry into force and the strengthening of instruments and mechanisms for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; to carry out concerted efforts at international forums to make progress, in the context of a gradual and systematic process, in consolidating international agreements directed towards bringing about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects; to make progress towards the realization of the area as a zone free from anti-personnel landmines and to endeavour to extend that zone to the entire western hemisphere; to reaffirm their commitment to broaden and systematize the information they provide to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and to establish a uniform methodology to provide information on military spending with a view to increasing transparency and fostering confidence in this field; to support the work of the Committee on Hemispheric Security of the Organization of American States, particularly with respect to the mandate entrusted to it by the Plan of Action of the Second Summit of the Americas; and to stimulate cooperation among its members for the exclusively peaceful and safe use of nuclear energy and space science and technology.

The Political Declaration of MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile as a Zone of Peace reflects the excellent climate of cooperation and association in an atmosphere of freedom and democracy that exists in the realms of security, defence, confidence-building and friendship among our countries. That constitutes a major contribution to efforts to strengthen international peace and security.

I shall now speak, still on behalf of the countries of MERCOSUR — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — and the associated States, Bolivia and Chile, on agenda item 71 (t) "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

A little more than a year after the entry into force of the Convention we are very gratified to note the progress achieved in the implementation of this capital instrument for disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Convention has been ratified by more than 120 States. Nevertheless, despite rapid progress in the membership, much more remains to be done to realize our aspiration to give the Convention and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons breadth and make it universal.

Even before the Declaration of Ushuaia to which I have just referred, the Declaration of Mendoza in 1993 anticipated the intention of our countries to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. All the States of MERCOSUR have signed the Chemical Weapons Convention and have either ratified it or are in the process of completing internal procedures for ratification.

The Group wishes to praise the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Ambassador José Mauricio Bustani, for his dynamism and efficiency. As he himself declared only a few days ago to the Committee, despite all the achievements of the Organization in its short life, it still has titanic tasks before it. By the year 2007, for instance, 8 million items of chemical ammunition must be destroyed, many of them situated in countries at present encountering difficult economic conditions. Similarly, activities to verify the chemical industry must be pursued. Since these are measures related to promoting mutual confidence, the international community must remain vigilant so that the terms of the Convention will be rigorously applied to all member States.

The countries of MERCOSUR and the associated States would like to implement the Convention in the most comprehensive manner possible. With this in view, in Rio de Janeiro, with the technical support of the OPCW, a seminar for Latin-American and Caribbean countries was organized in order to improve the capacity of the national authorities to make statements and carry out inspections.

The seminar lends substance to the other aspect of the Convention, the cooperation component. In addition to cooperation in the realm of technology, the machinery of the Convention should be used to promote legitimate trade in chemical substances. Not to do so would be to contribute to weakening this model instrument for disarmament and non-proliferation.

More than 80 years have passed since chemical warfare was waged outright in the fields of Flanders. Since then millions of human beings have suffered this horrible fate. We must make sure that chemical weapons will be locked away forever in their Pandora's box. The Convention and the OPCW are the instruments to eradicate this malignancy from the face of the earth. The States of MERCOSUR and associates are prepared to support this effort. That is why they support draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38, presented by the delegations of Canada and Poland.

Mr. Lahiri (India): My delegation has requested the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.16, entitled "Reducing nuclear danger".

It has now become abundantly clear that despite all talk of assured second-strike capability in cold war nuclear doctrines, the actual operational configuration of nuclear weapons was for launch on warning. Since the intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) of the two then super-Powers took 30 minutes from lift-off to detonation, and while submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) took as little as 10 to 12 minutes, the time for the highest national authorities to take a decision which could determine the fate of human society was about three minutes for ICBMs and virtually zero for SLBMs, taking into account the time required for detection, assembling a crisis team and executing a decision to retaliate. This was the true nature of the horrendous risk of unintentional or accidental use that the hair-trigger alert of nuclear weapons posed to the people of the world.

From all the accounts available to us now from hands-on experts from the nuclear-weapon States, this dangerous operational configuration of nuclear weapons continues even after the end of the cold war, posing risks to humanity which are completely unacceptable and totally divorced from the political realities of the post-cold-war world. The numerical reductions under START have not even begun to address this issue. Indeed, there are budding Dr. Strangeloves who are eagerly scanning for all sorts of hypothetical dangers lurking over the horizon, to which these frightening nuclear capacities with their hair-trigger-alert configurations can be hooked up.

On 25 January 1995 the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration launched a research rocket skywards from an island off Norway. It was picked up by a Russian radar installation 470 miles away. To the Russians the trajectory apparently resembled that of a Trident missile launched from a United States submarine. Within minutes Russia's nuclear command and control system was placed on a higher level of alert, and President Yeltsin apparently activated his nuclear briefcase in order to be able to issue launch orders if necessary. The fate of human society at that moment hung in the balance.

This and other similar events led to a study by the United States Congressional Budget Office on approaches to reducing the chances of inadvertent nuclear war. One of these studies now under way apparently involves a series of steps that the United States and Russia could take to reduce or stand down the alert status of their nuclear forces.

There is broad support today, including among the most knowledgeable and experienced past practitioners of nuclear deterrence, that immediate steps are necessary to dissipate this shadow hanging over mankind's future through measures such as de-alerting nuclear forces and adopting no-first-use policies. Among proponents of this view are Robert McNamara, the former United States Secretary of Defense; Alan Cranston, former United States Senator; General Charles Horner, the allied air force commander during the Gulf War and now at the Stimson Centre; Bruce Blair, former launch control officer in the Air Force and now a leading command and control authority at Brookings; Frank von Hippel, Assistant Director for Nuclear Security during 1993-1994 and now at Princeton; Jonathan Schell, author of *The Fate of the Earth* and "The Gift of Time: The Case for Abolishing Nuclear Weapons"; Major-General Burns, former Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), now at the Stimson Centre; Fred Ikle, former ACDA Director; and Roger Molander, nuclear war advisor at the United States National Security Council 1968-1979 and now at Rand. In addition, non-governmental organizations such as Pugwash, led by its President Josef Rotblat, and the Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy, which is leading the Abolition-2000 campaign, strongly support a de-alerting call.

A further benefit of de-alerting would be immediately to bring other nuclear-armed countries into the dialogue on reducing nuclear dangers. Whatever one may think of the refusal of the United Kingdom, France and China to participate in numerical reductions until the arsenals of the United States and Russia are brought below a certain threshold, it would be very difficult for them to refuse to participate in discussions on steps to reduce nuclear dangers through de-alerting, *et cetera*.

What is perfectly clear is that these matters are of legitimate concern to the international community as a whole and that nuclear-weapon States cannot claim the right to discuss these issues in a cabal of their own when the consequences of nuclear accidents flowing from their nuclear doctrines would have disastrous effects on all the peoples of the world.

These are the issues which draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.16 seeks to begin to address. The delegation of India has held intensive consultations over the past three weeks to ascertain the views of delegations in the Committee on the draft resolution. It is clear that the concerns being addressed in it are widely shared. Several of the suggestions made by various delegations have been incorporated.

Consultations are still in progress with several interested delegations regarding the text of operative paragraphs 1 and 2, particularly on the question of the States which should be addressed. As a State possessing nuclear weapons it would scarcely have been appropriate for India to call upon the five nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to submit to disciplines in the matter of reducing nuclear dangers while we ourselves stayed out of accepting similar obligations. On the other hand, a number of delegations have indicated to us their view that the draft resolution, aimed at urgent action to reduce nuclear dangers, should be addressed for the present only to the five NPT nuclear-weapon States because these countries possess the largest arsenals and some of them also maintain nuclear doctrines rooted in the cold war mind-set. If we find broad support for this view we would have no difficulty in reflecting this appropriately in the text of operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft resolution before the Committee acts upon this draft. We would like to emphasize that operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, requiring concrete action to reduce nuclear dangers, is the crux of the draft resolution, and that is what we would like to concentrate on.

My delegation will seek action on this draft resolution as soon as consultations with various delegations have been completed.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): It is a personal source of pleasure for me to take the floor under your chairmanship, Sir. The delegation of Egypt has the honour to present, on behalf of States members of the League of Arab States, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.1 under agenda item 74 entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

In order to accommodate the different concerns of the many interested delegations, the draft was the subject of intensive consultations which led to the submission of this revised text. This new draft is based on the resolution adopted last year by the General Assembly under the same agenda item. It does, however, take into account the prevailing realities as they stand today in the region of the Middle East.

Such realities underline a basic fact in the Middle East, namely, that Israel remains the only State in the region which has not yet acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and that is exactly what the seventh preambular paragraph objectively states. This, as we underscore, is not name-calling or singling out but is simply a clear and accurate reflection of reality, stated in a carefully measured and descriptive manner. It is, in fact, an invitation to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We have used neutral language that simply states an undeniable reality and is therefore not subjective in any manner, no matter how hard Israel attempts to delude us.

As we stated before the Committee in the general debate, only one country in the Middle East is widely believed to possess a significant arsenal of nuclear weapons. Only one country in the Middle East operates unsafeguarded nuclear installations and activities. Only one country in the Middle East refuses to adhere to the NPT and refuses to discuss the nuclear issue. Only one country in the Middle East refuses full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. The identity of that country is now widely acknowledged — Israel. Let us not be deluded. Israel has singled itself out, no one else. It is not our doing. The credit goes back to Israel. Nonetheless the reaction of the international community to this dangerous, provocative and roguish situation, when compared with other examples, remains mitigated and muted at best.

The achievement of universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty remains a cardinal priority not only for the Middle East region but also for the international community as a whole. Universality consolidates the edifice of the NPT regime. This has been underscored by the Treaty itself and subsequently confirmed by the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted on 11 May 1995 by the Review and Extension Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as in the provisions of the resolution on the Middle East adopted by consensus by that Conference. It is for these reasons that we consider that Israel's refusal to accede to the NPT impedes the realization of the objective of attaining universal adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Needless to say, the continuation of such imbalance and asymmetry in the legal obligations and commitments of the States of the Middle East cannot but further aggravate serious security concerns over the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and consequently undermine the efforts by various regional and extraregional parties to establish confidence-building measures, in particular those efforts aimed at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Regional parties that have renounced the nuclear option and acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States are now questioning the effect of their accession on their own national security. "Has our accession", they ask, "increased our security?" It is a very pertinent question and deserves repetition: "Has our accession", they ask, "increased our security?" How can our security be safeguarded while Israel continues its refusal to join the NPT and to place all its nuclear facilities under full-scope IAEA safeguards? Arab States have delivered and honoured their promise. Since 1995 the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Djibouti have all acceded, leaving Israel as the only State that still refuses to accede, nor has it declared an intention to do so. The draft resolution is saying only that. Again, this is a factual descriptive statement and is not in any way name-calling, as some would wish us to believe.

A few years ago, as a token of our support for collective efforts, the title of this very item was changed from "Israeli nuclear armament" to "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". The change highlighted an attempt to depart from confrontation, arrive at reconciliation and move towards confidence-building. Now it is Israel's turn to make a positive gesture by joining all States of the region in acceding to the NPT, the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime.

Egypt, on behalf of States members of the League of Arab States, hopes to receive the same, if not more, overwhelming support from Member States for this draft resolution. Last year an unprecedented 147 votes in favour of the draft resolution came as direct support for our endeavours. That support came from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and elsewhere. We hope that this year the draft resolution will receive even more support. The message we see from such support is clear and undeniable, support for achieving the objectives of the non-proliferation regime, the consolidation of which is a solemn duty and sacred responsibility which we should all work and aspire to realize faithfully without any exceptions or double standards.

Organization of work

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Before continuing the debate on the introduction of draft resolutions I should like to say a few words while the Secretariat is present as to the procedure we will be following in the third stage of our work, that is to say the voting on the draft resolutions. I remind members that this procedure is outlined in rules 123 to 133 of the General Assembly rules of procedure. I just wish to make a few practical comments.

(*spoke in English*)

In accordance with the programme of work and agreed timetable, the Committee will begin the third stage of its work — action on all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 63 to 80 — tomorrow, Tuesday, 3 November at 10 a.m.

As I mentioned at the beginning of the meeting this afternoon, I should like to outline the procedure that the Committee will follow to take action on draft resolutions. At the outset of each meeting delegations will have the opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions. I underline the word "revised". Then I will call upon those delegations wishing to make general statements or comments other than in explanation of their position or vote on the draft resolutions in a particular cluster. So, no comments on draft resolutions, but comments on clusters. Thereafter, delegations may proceed to explain to explain their position or vote on the draft resolution before a decision is taken. After the Committee has taken a decision on a draft resolution I will call upon those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote on the draft resolution after a decision has been taken. Therefore delegations will be able to explain their vote before and after the vote on the draft resolution but must signal that to the Chair.

In accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions are not permitted to make statements in explanation of their vote. They are only allowed to make general statements at the beginning of the meeting, or on a new cluster. Again, no comment on draft resolutions but only on clusters. If delegations co-sponsor a draft resolution they do not have to explain their vote. That is quite logical.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, I urge those delegations wishing to request a recorded vote on any particular draft resolution kindly to inform the Secretariat of their intention before the Committee begins its action on any individual cluster. We must know in advance; if members want a recorded vote, please inform us.

With regard to any deferment of action on any draft resolution delegations should inform the Secretariat in advance. Every effort should be made to refrain from resorting to a deferment of action. Again, please inform us in advance.

I hope that those procedures are clear to all delegations. Are there any comments on that part of the procedure? Think about it. We are ready to answer any questions during the rest of the afternoon.

If there are no other comments, I should like to inform delegations that the Committee will begin action tomorrow on the first draft resolution of the first three clusters contained in the revised cluster paper that Committee members have just received, that is, nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and disarmament aspects of outer space. Tomorrow we will start with the first draft resolution of the first cluster. Action can be delayed at the request of delegations or because they imply financial expense by the Organization, and there we must await the report of the Organization before action can be taken.

Delegations have today also received a letter about the medium-term plan, document A/C.1/53/8. In it the Chairman of the Fifth Committee requests the views of the First Committee on the relevant proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 1998-2001. The document references to the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination that representatives will need are contained in that letter.

I would appreciate delegations conveying their views on the medium-term plan to me as early as possible so that I as your Chairman will be able to respond to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee by the date he has requested me to respond, that is, by this coming Friday, 6 November.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I want to thank you, Sir, for the clarification you have given and the procedure we will be following for the third stage of our work, action on draft resolutions. Is it possible for the Secretariat to give any details as to which drafts the First Committee will take action on tomorrow? A certain number of delegations are following work in the General Assembly on an agenda item on the report of the Organization of African Unity as well as following the work in the First Committee. Is it possible for the Secretariat right now to give details about the draft resolutions on which the Committee will have to take action tomorrow?

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Tomorrow, the Committee will take three clusters, namely cluster 1, nuclear weapons; cluster 2, other weapons of mass destruction; and cluster 3, outer space.

As representatives will have seen in the cluster paper just distributed, cluster 1 has draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.2 and L.3. However, draft resolution L.2 will entail financial clarification, so it will not be taken up tomorrow morning. The Secretariat has officers who will go to the main sponsors and co-sponsors to check whether draft resolutions are ready for action or not, and whether with a vote or without a vote, or with separate votes on different paragraphs. We will collect all the information before action will be taken.

As at this moment I believe action will be taken tomorrow morning on draft resolutions L.3, L.10/Rev.1, L.11, L.14, L.16, L.19, L.21/Rev.1, L.22, L.24, L.51, which is the amendment to L.24, L.36, L.37, L.42, L.45, L.47 and L.48. The Secretariat has been informed that L.49 will be postponed.

On cluster 2, other weapons of mass destruction, tomorrow, possibly, we will take up draft resolution L.6/Rev.1, L.9, L.28, and L.38/Rev.1. On cluster 3, outer space, there is only one draft resolution, L.40.

If the main sponsors of any draft resolution consider that consultations are still needed and a draft resolution is not ready for action, they should immediately inform the Secretariat so as to enable it to take the proper action and to arrange the draft resolutions that will be ready for action tomorrow.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I am sorry to have interrupted the procedure of introducing draft resolutions, but this gives members of the Committee time to think about the way in which they understand the development. It also allows time for the Secretariat to think about it. Unfortunately the Secretary has to leave the meeting soon. Are there any comments on what I have just said?

Ms. Kunadi (India): I should like to request the Secretary to read out the list of draft resolutions for cluster 1 because I missed some of them.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Cluster 1 for tomorrow will be: draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, L.10/Rev.1, L.11, L.14, L.16, L.19 and L.21/Rev.1. I have just been informed that L.22 will be deferred. Next is L.24 and L.51, which is an amendment to L.24, L.36, and L.37. I have also just been informed that L.42 will be deferred. Next is L.45 and L.47.

I have just been informed that L.48 will not be taken up but will be deferred. Draft resolution L.16 is not ready either and will be deferred. If there are no more indications I shall read the list once more.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I think everyone is very interested in knowing what will be voted on tomorrow. Perhaps we could be happy that the Secretariat has read out the initial list and in the next 10 to 15 minutes people could communicate with the Secretariat and then the Secretary could read an agreed list, because I find this amendment-on-the-run process a little difficult to follow.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I suggest the following procedure: think about the draft resolutions which delegations wish to defer and then I will sum up at the end of the meeting today. I think that will save a lot of confusion.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We will now return to the introduction of draft resolutions.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): It is a pleasure for my delegation to introduce five draft resolutions on behalf of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). These draft resolutions will be considered under clusters 2, 7 and 8.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.28 entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol" recalls the long-standing determination of the international community to ban chemical and biological weapons. It welcomes initiatives taken by some States parties to the 1925 Geneva Protocol in withdrawing their reservations and renews the General Assembly's previous calls to observe strictly the principles, objectives and provisions of that Treaty, and it calls upon those States that continue to maintain reservations to withdraw them. I wish to draw the attention of delegations to a minor amendment in the fifth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. The word "recent" in the first line should be deleted.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.25, entitled "United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament", is a new draft resolution that intends to underline the importance of all regional centres as mechanisms to inform, educate and generate public understanding and support in the field of arms control and disarmament. The draft resolution emanates from the twelfth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Durban, South Africa, at which the heads of State or Government welcomed the decision of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly contained in resolution 52/220 not only to maintain but also to revitalize the three regional centres in Nepal, Peru and Togo.

The activities and programmes conducted by these regional centres make a valuable contribution towards changing basic attitudes to peace and security, to the identification of pertinent issues and approaches, especially through the organization of meetings and conferences, and to the promotion of regional and subregional dialogue on disarmament. These centres seek to provide useful insights to common problems and thereby facilitate progress towards greater security at lower levels of armaments. They also serve as a useful forum for consideration of relevant issues and new approaches to arms limitation.

The draft resolution further requests Member States in each of these regions, as well as those in a position to do so, and also intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and foundations to make voluntary contributions to the three regional centres so as to enable them to fulfil their role and to enhance their programmes and activities. It is the hope of the Non-Aligned Movement that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

As delegations are aware, at its fifty-second session the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 52/38 F, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". It has been a long-standing objective of the Non-Aligned Movement and other members of the international community to work towards the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). For that reason the Non-Aligned Movement heads of State or Government at the recent Durban Summit once again expressed their support for the convening of an SSOD-IV.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50 recalls the three previous special sessions on disarmament that were held during the period 1978 to 1988, and it calls for further steps that would lead to the convening of the fourth special session with the participation of all Member States, and which is subject to the emergence of a consensus on its objectives and agenda. Such a session would, *inter alia*, offer an opportunity to mobilize world public opinion for the elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as well as for the control and reduction of conventional armaments.

The sponsors of the draft resolution believe that these objectives can be achieved under the multilateral auspices of the United Nations, which should be utilized as a forum to generate action-oriented negotiations. The draft resolution therefore recommends that the Disarmament Commission should, during its 1999 substantive session, again consider the item "Convening of a special session on disarmament" with the objective of promoting agreement on the agenda and timing of the special session.

The fourth draft resolution that my delegation introduces on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement is entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control", and contained in document A/C.1/53/L.26. The fundamental objective of this draft resolution is to ensure compliance with relevant environmental norms when negotiating and implementing treaties and agreements related to disarmament. The international community has long been aware of the detrimental consequences of uncontrolled sources of radioactivity and the risks associated with military activities involving nuclear materials. The dismantling of weapons in certain categories requires techniques and methods that would sustain and augment the prevailing environmental standards.

While the draft resolution refrains from making any reference to specific disarmament agreements, it nonetheless calls upon States to take relevant environmental norms fully into account while negotiating arms control and disarmament treaties and agreements. It also calls for the application of the advances made in science and technology in enhancing security and in facilitating disarmament without adverse impact on the environment or on their effective contribution to the attainment of sustainable development. As in the past, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session, based on information received from Member States concerning measures they have adopted in furtherance of the objectives contained therein. We remain hopeful that the draft resolution will be adopted by the Committee with the widest possible support.

Finally, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.27, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", underlines the importance of reallocating valuable resources released as a result of disarmament to development purposes and thereby reducing the gap between the developed and developing countries. In the view of the non-aligned countries, this relationship has gained momentum and indeed become relevant against the backdrop of the diversion of a large proportion of financial, material and technological resources to armaments, which has placed a heavy burden on the economies of many nations, especially those of the developing countries. The stark contrast between expenditures for armaments and the paucity of aid for socio-economic progress is also self-evident. The draft resolution acknowledges the actions taken in the context of the Final Document of the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development and invites Member States to communicate their views and proposals for implementing the Action Programme adopted by that Conference. The Secretary-General is further requested to continue to take action for implementing that Programme and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session. We hope that this draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Please allow me, Sir, to make a brief statement in my national capacity. Given South Africa's strong support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, I wish to indicate our support for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status". In this regard I wish to recall that the heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement at the recent Durban Summit welcomed and supported Mongolia's policy to institutionalize its single-State nuclear-weapon-free status. We trust this draft resolution will receive maximum support.

South Africa will also, in view of its in-principle position in support of nuclear-weapon-free zones, be supporting draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.2, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia", L.3, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", L.19, on the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and L.23, entitled "Regional disarmament", as put forward by Belarus.

We are a sponsor of L.37, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas".

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): I have the honour to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50 on behalf of the European Union, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, which align themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the work of the previous Disarmament Commission session and the serious efforts made by the Chairman of its Working Group II on the issue of convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). The compromise paper presented by the Chairman gained near consensus on the objectives and agenda of the SSOD-IV. The European Union contributed actively to Commission efforts and tabled several working papers. This contribution was aimed at achieving the necessary consensus on the objectives and agenda of the special session. We regret that the Commission failed to reach consensus at this year's session.

We continue to support the convening of the SSOD-IV. A new special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is justified by the fundamental changes in the international security situation after the cold war. The confrontation of the past has been replaced by new approaches based on cooperation. At the same time, international arms control efforts are facing new challenges. Since the Disarmament Commission session last spring the international security environment has changed further.

The European Union considers that the objectives of the SSOD-IV are: to review developments relevant to disarmament and non-proliferation; to assess the present international situation in order to identify new opportunities in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation; and to establish consensus on methods, priorities and objectives for a new and balanced programme of future action on arms control and disarmament reflecting the realities of today.

The importance of holding a new special session is widely recognized in all groups, as indicated by the statements in the general debate this year. In 1997 the resolution on holding a special session devoted to disarmament was passed without a vote. The EU hopes that consensus will also be reached during this year's Assembly session.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50 recommends that this issue be taken up at the 1999 session of the Disarmament Commission. This will be the fourth year that the Commission has addressed the matter. Nonetheless, the European Union would support a further effort to secure consensus on this important issue. We consider that the Chairman's paper of the last session, which is the product of three years of painstaking work, offers the only realistic basis for such an effort. If consensus can be reached, the next session of the General Assembly could set a date for the special session and launch the preparatory process.

On this basis the European Union is ready to join the consensus on a draft resolution recommending that the Disarmament Commission should promote agreement on the objectives and agenda of an SSOD-IV. But it is important that the draft resolution should not in any way prejudice the substance of the Commission's deliberations. We look forward to working with the sponsors of L.50 to this end.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Ecuador today takes over as Chairman of the Latin American and Caribbean Group for the month of November, and it is in this capacity that my delegation received the Group's request to make the following declaration on the Group's behalf.

One of the essential purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and of the establishment of the Organization itself was to establish a legal and political framework that would be conducive to international peace and security. Over time the concept has indeed gained ground that there can be no development unless peace and security have previously been properly rooted in the international community. Without effective measures that can make decisive contributions to the disarmament of the various States, such a climate will remain merely a rhetorical aspiration, lacking in content.

In this context it is important to recall General Assembly resolution 39/63 J of 12 December 1984. It referred to the need for a world disarmament campaign, which was welcomed by the region on 3 December 1986 with the establishment of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development, with headquarters in Lima. The prompt and effective reaction of Latin America and the Caribbean to this important campaign affords clear evidence of the continent's political will to promote all measures that would make it possible to bring about peace and security in a broad sense and give rise to very concrete initiatives relating to disarmament.

In this connection a close examination of recent events in the region related to disarmament and international security would make it apparent that it has very good credentials in this field, bearing in mind the signature and ratification by the countries of the region of the main disarmament treaties. There is, therefore, an important "critical mass" that testifies to the region's clear interest in making tangible contributions to the creation of a way of life that is in conformity with international law and with the Charter of the United Nations as far as international peace and security are concerned.

The foregoing leads us to call for strong support from the international community and the United Nations so that the Centre, established more than a decade ago, can enter into effective operation. In keeping with that legal framework, we are convinced that the work, activities, exchanges of ideas, seminars and other undertakings, given sufficient material and financial resources for their genuine implementation, will enable this Centre to become a vehicle for initiatives that will not only benefit the region but will also help to define innovative forms of cooperation with other regions.

Similarly, the Centre is certainly capable of providing relevant academic inputs to give political decisions broader and more sustainable content. From another perspective the Centre is part of confidence-building measures that have been under way in the region and of continuous bilateral initiatives on these issues.

Within this framework a centre such as the one I have described will also provide indispensable support for more and better measures designed to make progress on the issue of confidence-building measures and to support and consolidate the relationship among the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Lastly, we would like to stress that we attach the greatest importance to this Latin American and Caribbean Group statement. It bears witness to our clear-cut interest in establishing a centre that recognizes that it has as its legal basis not only a United Nations General Assembly resolution and is thus universal in its vocation, but furthermore also recognizes its roots in the 1984 World Disarmament Campaign.

Mr. Sorreta (Philippines): Allow me to join other representatives in expressing gladness at seeing you, Sir, lead our work in the Committee. Allow me also to pledge our support and cooperation to you and your Bureau and to your ever helpful and accommodating secretariat.

As in previous sessions, the work before us promises to be anything but routine. We are witnessing a larger number of States cutting across regional lines and group affiliations to address the issue of nuclear proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

We support Myanmar's comprehensive approach to nuclear disarmament. Myanmar's draft resolution presents the action bench-mark for many States and reflects the determination — and perhaps to some extent the disappointment — of the Non-Aligned Movement on this issue. The initiative of the Group of Eight also deserves all our support. That draft resolution seeks to provide a practical and realistic bridge to link all our sincere desires to rid the world of nuclear weapons. We have seen animated debate on this draft resolution, and we are quite happy to note that so far it has proven to be a unifying force rather than a divisive one, with, of course, the obvious exceptions.

The global movement towards nuclear disarmament has also taken on different shapes and forms. We continue to look to the legal avenue with Malaysia's timely and comprehensive draft resolution based on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*. The Philippines gives its full support to Malaysia's draft resolution.

On the legal front, ironically, attempts to include nuclear weapons as prohibited weapons in the Statute of the International Criminal Court in Rome this year were not very successful. The Philippines finds it even more ironic that certain non-State actors had helped to make this more difficult to accomplish by formally questioning the motives of States wishing to equate nuclear weapons with other weapons of mass destruction and other prohibited weapons.

The Philippines, which a decade ago had already established itself in its Constitution as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, supports Mongolia's draft resolution on a single-nation nuclear-weapon-free zone. While the Philippines supports Mongolia's draft resolution, it is our position that a State can, as a matter of right, declare itself to be a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We also largely support the draft resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere. However, while we were an original sponsor, we have had to withhold our sponsorship over the inclusion of formulations that seek to equate the right of sea passage exercised by ships to ships carrying weapons of mass destruction.

The seas and oceans are no longer as free to be used and abused as some might wish. There are many limitations on the notion of freedom of the seas, not only in terms of passage but also in terms of living and seabed resources. In truth, the seas are not as free as certain Powers would want them to be. For many years States have endeavoured to make the sea safer, regulate its use and exploitation and preserve its natural and delicate environment. If the Philippines is indeed to err, it wishes to do so in favour of the creation of a norm that limits the seas and oceans when it comes to weapons of mass destruction. The Philippines wishes to emphasize that nothing in any of the nuclear-weapon-free zone agreements would limit the right of passage for ships, particularly ships that are essential for trade and commerce.

We also welcome and support draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 and pray that there will never again be another need for a resolution such as this.

While we are aware of how difficult nuclear disarmament is, we are hopeful — and in fact are confident — that addressing the issue of small arms will not be as difficult. While nuclear weapons threaten our very existence, small arms are killing us off one by one, including women and children. The tragedy caused by small arms must stop. We have two very well-balanced and realistic draft resolutions on small arms before us from Japan and South Africa, and the Philippines is proud to co-sponsor both.

The international community's dedication and determination have already proven their worth in the area of anti-personnel mines. In this regard, the Philippines is pleased to support and co-sponsor Canada's draft resolution on anti-personnel mines and commends and thanks Canada for its tireless and resolute efforts and those of other States on behalf of the Ottawa Convention. The Ottawa Convention is living proof that States, hand in hand with non-governmental organizations, can actually make a difference.

Mr. Richter (Germany): As a member of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts I should like to contribute to the thematic debate on small arms and light weapons. Germany notes with satisfaction that the international community is more than ever aware of the growing problems arising from the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons. Their implications pose a serious threat to the peace and security of affected countries and subregions and reduce their prospects for economic development, particularly in post-conflict situations.

Various national, subregional and regional initiatives have been launched to tackle this problem. Germany not only welcomes this positive development but also has contributed actively to it within the European Union and in several international forums, such as the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and light weapons and through the establishment of a group of interested States on the basis of resolution 52/38 J that was adopted by consensus at last year's session of the General Assembly. Germany is fully committed to making further progress.

Though I appreciate regional and subregional activities on small arms, let me also briefly point out their deficiencies. None of the regions has yet taken a unified approach as regards the whole spectrum of necessary actions, that is, to reduce effectively the uncontrolled stockpiles in affected countries and to prevent such accumulations occurring in future. Moreover, significant differences exist in the degree to which regions and subregions have committed themselves to take action. Except for the Organization of American States (OAS) Convention, actions taken up to now are far from covering the whole of the regions concerned. Finally, so far there is no internationally agreed and globally applied — let alone legally binding — instrument in place to counter effectively the excessive accumulation of small arms.

Against this background, Germany sees an urgent need for the international community of States to embark on a dual-track approach which addresses both preventive and reactive reduction measures in parallel, as the expert panel suggested in its 1997 report. Reactive reduction measures alone would fail to achieve the purpose if at the same time the countries or subregions concerned were not sealed against the further influx of small arms and if major suppliers continued transferring arms regardless of the end user and did not restrict their arms transfers in a responsible manner.

In turn, focusing only on preventive measures will not help affected countries in reducing the excessive accumulations of small arms over which they have lost control. Furthermore, the existing large and uncontrolled stockpiles in affected countries today constitute probably the most important source for the illicit circulation of weapons. Therefore a failure to address these stockpiles will render preventive measures less effective.

With respect to reactive reduction measures in affected countries or subregions, Germany recognizes the necessity for a tailored approach to every specific case. However, one should not neglect the relevance of experience gained in past operations and the common features of such actions in which the international community is involved in many ways. Why should it start from scratch with everything the same again despite all the experience gained in the past? All countries involved want to be reassured that their contributions are not made to no avail.

One important lesson learned, particularly with regard to post-conflict situations, is that practical disarmament measures, such as arms collection and destruction in conjunction with demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, have to be embedded in a sound concept of consolidating peace. It includes acceptable political solutions to the root causes of conflict, confidence-building measures as incentives for the voluntary surrender of arms, and a proportional and integrated approach towards security and development in order to sustain disarmament and peace consolidation.

Against this background it seems to be reasonable to develop at the international level a conceptual framework for practical disarmament measures in support of peace consolidation which could serve as a guideline to be applied as the situation requires. Such a useful tool would facilitate the engineering of specifically tailored subregional programmes while at the same time ensuring the coherence and consistency of international efforts.

The Disarmament Commission is in its third year of work on such a concept. Germany appeals to all Member States to make every effort to enable the only deliberative disarmament body of the United Nations to adopt a set of meaningful guidelines during its third session on this issue, in spring 1999.

Regarding preventive measures, regional and subregional approaches are viable steps on the way to a comprehensive prevention of the destabilizing accumulation of small arms. However, in view of the global nature of their uncontrolled and excessive circulation and dissemination, which are not confined to subregions or regions, and in view of the many differences and loopholes within and between the regional and subregional initiatives, Germany sees an urgent need for global concerted action. My delegation notes with satisfaction, though, that the deliberations in this Committee have shown that the international community of States more and more recognizes the urgency of global action.

It is for this reason that Germany very much welcomes and has actually co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13, entitled "Small arms", which has been submitted by the delegation of Japan. I wish to underline in particular the suggestion made in operative paragraph 1 that the General Assembly

> "*Decides* to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects not later than 2001".

With regard to the scope of such a conference, my delegation holds the view that it must be wide enough to cover all relevant issues associated with the multifaceted small arms problem. Limiting the scope to combating the illicit arms trade only in its traditional understanding, that is, criminal breaches of existing arms legislation and import or export controls, would be pointless and would not tackle the relevant issues. It would only duplicate the work done by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

A sober analysis, however, leads to the conclusion that, for example, criminal breaches of export controls in producing countries is just one of the various reasons for the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms in conflict areas and does not even constitute the main source of it. Since most small arms start life legally before ending up in the hands of armed factions and sectors of the population, other important factors have to be considered as well, such as covert supply by Governments to non-State entities; irresponsible though authorized sale of weapons surplus for purely commercial purposes; lack of State control over State or private arms holdings including so-called losses of security forces due to theft, corruption, or ethnic and political affinities; and the deliberate distribution of weapons by Governments or opposition forces to the population in times of crisis or internal conflict.

In civil wars the collapse of government control often entails the fragmentation of State arms holdings, which are inherited by competing factions and armed parts of the population. Thus, legally acquired weapons often acquire an uncontrolled status, which is one of the main sources of the destabilizing accumulation of small arms in our day. It is not clear, and no internationally agreed common definition exists, whether, or at what point in time, these uncontrolled weapons change their legal status and become illegal or illicitly owned arms.

My delegation has serious doubts whether the term "illicit arms trade" is appropriate to cover all these grey areas regarding possession, transfer and circulation of small arms. It is for this reason that Germany attaches great importance to a wide scope for the international conference, which would allow us to address all relevant aspects associated with this multifaceted problem. It is our understanding that the scope, which is defined in operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution L.13 by the term "illicit arms trade in all its aspects" — and let me repeat, "in all its aspects" — allows for such a proper reflection of all relevant aspects.

Many of these relevant issues have been highlighted in the Secretary-General's 1997 report on small arms which was prepared with the assistance of the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Donowaki. My delegation trusts that in accordance with operative paragraph 3 (b) of the draft resolution before us, this report will be given due attention by the Secretary-General and the recently established new group of governmental experts, as well as by Member States in preparing recommendations on the details of the scope and the agenda of the conference.

While my delegation appreciates the conceptual role of the new group of governmental experts in preparing recommendations on the objective, scope, agenda, dates and venue of the international conference, we also wish to underline that the preparatory process must be open-ended and reflect the various views expressed by all interested Member States.

Bearing in mind that according to operative paragraph 2 of this draft resolution a decision on the venue of the international conference will be taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, let me on behalf of the German delegation thank the Government of Switzerland for its generous offer to host this conference in Geneva. Let me also take the opportunity to thank the delegation of South Africa for preparing draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41 on the illicit traffic in small arms, which Germany has also co-sponsored. Those draft resolutions point in the right direction and are important steps towards effective international action to solve the small arms problem. They deserve the broadest possible support by Member States.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): We welcome this opportunity to offer our views on the draft resolution dealing with the issue of the prevention of the violent disintegration of States, document A/C.1/53/L.44. While we do not necessarily believe that the First Committee of the General Assembly is the most appropriate place to deal with this issue, we are nevertheless convinced that the draft resolution addresses one of the most timely and burning issues on the agenda of the international community and thus of the United Nations. We are therefore grateful to the main sponsor and to the co-sponsors for bringing this matter to our attention.

At the same time we think that the text in its current form does not properly address the problem and that it thus constitutes a lost opportunity. Quite some time ago we made amendments that would, in our view, considerably improve the text, and we have noted with regret that the sponsors have been able to accommodate only a few points of concern. I should like briefly to offer the reasons why we continue to believe that L.44 falls short of what it could and should achieve.

The sponsors have accepted language that states that conflicts within States constitute at present the majority of violent — that is, armed — conflict. It is certainly a useful addition to the text but it seems to us, in a context dealing with prevention, logical and indeed inevitable also to say that the United Nations system should promote efforts aimed at preventing such conflicts. As is generally known, such conflicts often have their root causes in tensions between central Governments and communities within the States concerned or among such communities. We have therefore suggested language which would, in very general terms, underline the need for the United Nations system to address such problems.

In this context we do not share the view of those who see a necessary contradiction or competition between the principles of territorial integrity and self-determination. We are rather of the opinion that existing international law provides a solid basis for considering these principles as mutually reinforcing. It is along these lines that we have made suggestions to the sponsors of the text, and we remain very open to further discussions with them or any other delegation interested in our suggestions. We would be very glad to find ourselves in a position to support a General Assembly resolution dealing with an issue which is of the utmost importance to us.

Mr. Miranda (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): For Peru the increase at the international level in the manufacture of and illicit trafficking in small arms, as well as the growing links between this traffic and other types of criminal conduct such as drug-trafficking and terrorism, is a matter of grave concern. As we said in our statement in the general debate in this Committee, weapons in that low-cost, easy-maintenance category are tools for violence which have an impact on civilian security. Therefore controlling traffic in these weapons has a humanitarian dimension.

Illegally obtained, these articles encourage violence by criminal organizations and put at risk the well-being of peoples, their economic and social development and their right to live in peace. They represent a threat to the security of States, and the treatment has to be linked to a strategy of prevention or solution of armed conflict. We consider it essential that all States — particularly those that produce, export or import small arms as well as explosives, ammunition and other related material — should take the necessary measures to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit traffic.

We also think that international cooperation is very important, such as consultations and exchanges of information and other appropriate measures to strengthen international machinery in this field. In this manner we would jointly and in a coordinated fashion confront illicit traffic in small arms and also ammunition, explosives and other related material. The Government of Peru has recently adopted a law against the possession of weapons of war and for their regulation, considering that they should be left exclusively in the hands of the armed forces, the national police and other public security services. Peru has also signed the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS) in November 1997. That Convention has been submitted by the President of the Republic to the Congress for assessment and future ratification. We consider that the text of that Convention should serve as a model for the elaboration of related international instruments, preferably within the context of the United Nations.

Similarly, Peru participated in the working group of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission which prepared model regulations for the control of international traffic in small arms, their parts and components and ammunition, which was adopted by the OAS General Assembly in its resolution 1543 in June this year. We would like to state that the Inter-American provisions are fully in conformity with Peruvian legislation in this field. For example, a relevant national body has been bringing the registry for transfers into line with the recommendations of the model regulations.

We support the initiative of the Secretary-General to convene a conference to draft an international convention in this field, and we commit ourselves to participating actively in this process. Peru, as a sponsor of General Assembly resolution 52/38 J, adopted last December for the same reasons I outlined earlier, is now co-sponsoring draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.13, entitled "Small arms" and introduced by Japan, and L.41, entitled "Illicit traffic in small arms" and introduced by South Africa.

Our country is committed to general and complete disarmament under strict international control as a central element of security and as the essential objective of the international community. Therefore we are parties to the principal international instruments regulating non-proliferation and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and those having indiscriminate effects.

We participated particularly in the so-called Ottawa process, which led to the elaboration and adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Peru deposited its instrument of ratification on 17 June, thus reaffirming our international stance in favour of disarmament, particularly in favour of those specific measures having a high content of humanitarian value. The prompt coming into force of this Convention, little more than a year after its adoption, demonstrates its importance to the international community and provides a formal opportunity to free humanity entirely from the indiscriminate and excessively injurious effects of these devices. We must work jointly and in a coordinated fashion so that the first meeting of States parties, to be held in May 1999 in Maputo, Mozambique, consolidates the advances in this field and reinforces its future implementation. We reaffirm our commitment to this end.

Similarly, Peru in 1996 ratified Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects concerning the use of mines, booby traps and other devices. We welcome its coming into force in future. Peru has repeatedly emphasized the need for the international community to make every possible effort to ensure the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines. We have consistently supported all efforts to this end in various international forums. For this reason we are co-sponsoring draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.33, introduced by Canada, and L.20, introduced by Sweden. We urge all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify both Conventions, thus bringing about the universality of instruments of this type which is necessary for the well-being of the international community.

As a member of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, we fully subscribe to the statement made a few moments ago by the delegation of Ecuador on behalf of the Group. We can also dispense with making any further comment on draft resolution L.25, on regional centres for peace and disarmament, which was introduced by the South African delegation on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). However, we would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the importance that Peru attaches to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 52/220 of December 1997. In that resolution it was decided to maintain and revitalize the regional centres so that they might achieve the purposes for which they were created. That is why we believe that draft resolution L.25, which we hope will be adopted by consensus, more clearly reflects the commitment of the Organization to peace, disarmament and development, and the contribution that regional centres can make to this end.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Before calling on the next speaker may I say that in view of the very large number of draft resolutions for which a deferred vote has been requested I have decided to add to tomorrow's list, cluster 4, conventional weapons, and cluster 5, regional disarmament and security. If delegations wish to defer any draft resolution in these two clusters, please contact the Secretary or the Chairman and point that out to us. I repeat, clusters 4 and 5 will also be examined tomorrow.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): I should like to offer comments on some of the draft resolutions put forth under cluster 1. It is Viet Nam's consistent policy to underline the importance of making contributions to building a world free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We strongly believe that nuclear disarmament must have the highest priority in the field of international security and disarmament. In line with this policy Viet Nam supports all initiatives and measures to promote the elimination of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction.

At this session of the First Committee we have recognized a renewed vigour in tackling the issue of nuclear disarmament, and we therefore welcome the various proposals towards this end. While significant progress has yet to be made in this area, we are still confident that the world community as a whole is forging ahead towards a better and more secure environment. Most noticeable of all, the end of the cold war and the reduction of tension in the relationships between the nuclear Powers also present new opportunities for the United Nations and the world community to formulate effective measures in the field of nuclear disarmament. Therefore, in our view enhanced efforts must be taken towards the commencement of negotiations for concluding a convention banning nuclear weapons. We agree with many delegations that the work of nuclear disarmament is a complex and difficult process calling for innovative initiatives and concerted efforts from both nuclear and non-nuclear States.

Viet Nam is co-sponsoring a number of draft resolutions presented under this cluster. We wish, however, to lay particular emphasis on the draft resolution introduced a few minutes ago by the representative of Myanmar in document A/C.1/53/L.47. Our delegation would like further to underline the view that this draft resolution presents the comprehensive approach towards the goal of nuclear disarmament, which in previous years enjoyed overwhelming support from member countries. My delegation is one among the many countries that are in favour of a time-bound framework programme for nuclear disarmament.

In this regard we would like to recall that Viet Nam, together with 27 other countries, put forward a programme at the Conference on Disarmament for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Viet Nam strongly believes that this proposal is very important and should be used as a practical and rational input for the negotiations at the Conference to reach the goal of total nuclear disarmament.

We are also a traditional sponsor of the draft resolution entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", drafted again this year by Malaysia. The unanimous decision adopted by the World Court delegitimizing the use of nuclear weapons is certainly an historic event and reflects the common view of the international community on the legal obligation of the nuclear-weapon States to nuclear disarmament.

It is also important to recall that the Court finds that the nuclear-weapon States are obligated to commence immediately negotiations to conclude an agreement leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Our delegation recognizes the common concern that a clear-cut commitment to total elimination of nuclear arsenals has yet to be made. We wish to reiterate the need to uphold the relevance of the Court's decisions. Furthermore, from the opinion of the Court against the threat or use of nuclear weapons it is obvious that the nuclear-weapon States must commit themselves to an international legally binding agreement to assure countries that still fear nuclear weapons against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. These common concerns and the serious threat of such horrible types of weapons have been reflected in the draft before the Committee, and our delegation will thus render its strongest support to draft resolution L.36.

In our view, the best way to pursue our ultimate goal, the elimination of nuclear weapons, is through a convention banning the stockpiling and production of weapons described in the draft resolution entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", in L.14, which is also co-sponsored by our country. Bearing this in mind my delegation encourages all initiatives and efforts that will lead to this goal, including proposals to work for a new agenda of practical intermediate steps, highlighting in particular the responsibilities of the nuclear-weapon States, on our way to achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament.

It should be stressed here again that we consistently prefer a forthcoming plan to do away with nuclear weapons under a strict programme with specified timing.

Mr. Moher (Canada): Speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, we wish to present formally draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22. We wish to emphasize in doing so that this resolution has been carefully drafted so as to focus specifically on recent nuclear tests in South Asia. It strongly deplores those tests in a straightforward manner, while noting the declarations made more recently by the States concerned. The draft resolution echoes similar expressions by the Group of Eight, the large majority of the Conference on Disarmament, the European Union, the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the Security Council itself, the Chair of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, the South Pacific Forum and the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

These earlier expressions and the draft resolution reinforce the norm opposed to nuclear tests established by the 187 States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and by the 150 States which have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is our considered view that this Committee and the General Assembly, as the global political forum, should confirm and reinforce that norm.

Since our initial open meeting on this draft, held on 22 October, two types of comments or observations have come to our attention. The first category asks why the draft does not deal with this topic within the broader complex of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation issues. Our answer has been and continues to be that there are many other draft resolutions in the First Committee dealing with that broader complex of subjects. Thus we do not see the need to do so yet again in a resolution designed to address one specific matter.

The second observation is that the draft resolution should focus on the future, that is, an outline for a process to enhance peace and security in South Asia. We consider such a draft resolution to be one that the States in the region should address if they so wish. In fact, there are other draft resolutions before the Committee that could be so directed. However, attempting to do so in a resolution dealing with nuclear tests only is not necessary and would only serve to dilute its central message.

Other suggestions for changes to L.22 have been made. Our reaction to those has essentially been the same as that already outlined. First, they merely serve to broaden the purpose of the resolution beyond the central objective that I have outlined, and secondly, they dilute the message contained therein.

In conclusion let us summarize by making five key points. First, the international community has clearly established a norm against nuclear tests. Both the NPT and the CTBT confirm that norm. Secondly, recent nuclear tests, whatever the rationales advanced to justify them, go against that norm. Thirdly, many regional and cross-regional mechanisms have spoken out to strongly deplore those tests. Fourthly, the First Committee of the General Assembly, the global general political forum, should also speak out to that effect. And, fifthly, it should do so specifically focused on that matter only.

We have consulted very widely in the preparation of the draft resolution. We have endeavoured to consult even more widely in the past ten days. Those consultations have revealed very broad support from all regions for this resolution. There is no legal or procedural matter preventing the Committee from acting. We therefore urge that this draft resolution receive the broadest possible support and that any effort to amend it, thereby diluting its purpose and its message, be strongly opposed. We are also pleased to signal that the draft resolution is now open to co-sponsorship. We welcome all who wish to do so.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour and pleasure for the delegation of Mali to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them", on behalf of the following sponsors: Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Japan, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger and Togo.

Since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 52/38 C, substantial progress has been made in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and it is for this reason that the present draft was amended. I should like to take up its various points.

First, the adoption in Abuja on 31 October 1998, just two days ago, by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), on the initiative of Mali, of a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa was a significant move forward in the struggle against the accumulation, proliferation and excessive use of small arms and light weapons. Through these measures the 16 member States of ECOWAS reinforced their determination to prevent the accumulation, proliferation and excessive use of small arms and light weapons in their subregion. The goal is to set up favourable circumstances for socio-economic development.

The moratorium, which takes effect on 1 November 1998, relates to landmines, grenades, portable rocket launchers, mortars and munitions. For the sponsors of the draft resolution it is now a matter of the international community adopting an identical policy in order to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We welcome in this respect the process which was set in motion by the Oslo platform in April 1998 and also by the Brussels appeal adopted last October, the result of which should be exactly what we are looking for.

Likewise we should welcome the conclusions of the group of governmental experts on small arms and the recommendations relating to the accumulation, proliferation and excessive use of such weapons. Thus in the light of these positive results draft resolution L.7 was amended in order to reflect the progress that has been made at the subregional, regional and international levels. The sponsors consider that we should allow efforts to progress towards broader cooperation and better coordination. For this purpose the draft resolution invites the international community to support policies and actions designed to curb the phenomenon of the proliferation of small arms.

In conclusion, I wish to thank all the sponsors for their commitment to the draft resolution and, on their behalf, thank the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and our partners in development for their constructive work so as to curb the phenomenon of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We hope, as in previous years, that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor initially to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.35, but I will also take this opportunity, with your permission, Sir, to comment on a couple of other draft resolutions and statements that we have heard here today.

I have the honour first to introduce draft resolution L.35, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, the Czech Republic, Italy, Mexico, Nepal, Norway, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and my own delegation.

The problems posed by conventional weapons must be dealt with at the global and regional levels in both their quantitative and qualitative aspects. If war originates in the minds of men, most arms races, especially in the conventional field, are the result of problems and disputes and political competition in various regions and subregions of the world. This is all the more so now, after the end of the cold war. A most important condition for arms control, therefore, is the resolution of conflicts and disputes. At the same time a conscious endeavour is required to insure against the creation of serious arms imbalances in various regions and subregions which can threaten security and stability. This can happen if some regional States resort to large-scale acquisition or production of armaments, while other States in the region are denied the ability to match such acquisitions. A grave arms imbalance can encourage aggression against weaker States. It can create compulsions for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These concepts are covered by the third, fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs of draft resolution L.35.

In this context the draft takes note of the various initiatives taken in various parts of the world including Latin America and South Asia for conventional arms control, and it recognizes the relevance and value of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The draft resolution in the seventh preambular paragraph repeats the belief that militarily significant States and States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting regional agreements, and in the next paragraph it also affirms the objective of preventing the possibility of military attack launched by surprise and to avoid aggression.

In the operative part, draft resolution L.35 once again decides to give urgent consideration to the issue of conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels. It also repeats the request to the Conference on Disarmament, as a first step, to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements.

We are disappointed that during the past three years the Conference on Disarmament has not found it possible to establish a mechanism to undertake the task of preparing the principles and framework as requested by the General Assembly. We believe this exercise is the right way in which the Conference could contribute in a practical way to promoting conventional arms control and regional and international peace and security. The sponsors strongly express the hope that the Conference will find it possible to commence its work on this subject early in 1999 and submit a report to the next session of the General Assembly.

I would now like to offer a few comments as a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", which was introduced earlier by the representative of Myanmar.

In the view of my delegation this is the one draft resolution before the Committee which genuinely and comprehensively addresses the goal of nuclear disarmament in its various aspects. Since the end of the cold war the threat of nuclear war has not been reduced. Indeed, it has increased. This is not only, as some would have us believe, due to the nuclear tests conducted in South Asia, but to the fact that some nuclear-weapon States claim to retain nuclear weapons indefinitely. But some of these nuclear-weapon States have espoused doctrines which emphasize the use of nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear weapons even against non-nuclear-weapon States. It arises from the fact that there is a halt in meaningful nuclear disarmament negotiations, both bilateral and multilateral. Even if the START II Treaty is implemented it will leave more than 10,000 nuclear weapons in the hands of the major nuclear-weapon States, and for the foreseeable future thousands of nuclear weapons will remain on alert ready to be used at a moment's notice to obliterate the world. These are the real dangers: from nuclear weapons, not from nuclear tests.

A conscious and planned endeavour for nuclear disarmament is required. Draft resolution L.47 offers a political road-map to achieve this objective. This is an ambitious road-map, but it is not an unrealistic one. It envisages a start with a revision and review of nuclear doctrines; with a halt in the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons; with action for de-alert and de-activation of nuclear weapons; with a multilateral agreement in the Conference on Disarmament which would espouse the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons; with a step-by-step process for a reduction of the nuclear threat; with an agreement on non-first-use and non-use of nuclear weapons; and the speedy conclusion of an agreement on an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament which could also be entrusted with negotiating a phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons. The draft resolution, finally, envisages the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament.

My delegation believes that this draft resolution offers a worthwhile approach that the international community should espouse. It is an approach that is espoused by the majority of the membership of our Organization, the members of the Non-Aligned Movement, and my delegation hopes and expects that the draft resolution will be adopted with the largest possible majority.

Finally let me offer a few comments on the draft resolution that has just been introduced by the representative of Canada, document L.22, and on the comments which he offered in his introductory statement.

To the representative of Canada and to his co-sponsors I should like to say that the nuclear tests that took place in South Asia, in particular the nuclear tests that were conducted by my country, did not happen in a vacuum. These were not the first but were perhaps the last nuclear tests to take place. They took place after 2,000 nuclear tests had been witnessed in the world. Therefore, we believe that it is unfair and unjust to focus attention for castigation on these tests only.

A norm is violated when a norm is accepted or is an obligation. The norm of nuclear testing was not accepted by my delegation, specifically — as we stated here in this room some years ago — because we knew and felt that our neighbour might test and we might have to respond. We deliberately did not accept the obligation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), knowing that we might have to respond. Indeed, article IX of the CTBT recognizes the right of a country to respond in case a nuclear test takes place which threatens its security. Let my colleague from Canada read the CTBT carefully, read the debates on article IX, and read the interpretative statement my delegation made on article IX after the adoption of the Treaty and during the consideration of the Treaty in Geneva. He stated specifically "if there is a test by our neighbour we will test", and we did so. We did not violate any norm that we had accepted. Indeed, it was expected that we would do so. We did so to defend ourselves, to establish nuclear deterrence and to defend our security. We would do so again if we had to. We did not violate any norm and we do not accept the kind of criticism that is levelled by delegations such as Canada which have contributed to the capacity of our neighbour to conduct those tests.

Thirdly, my colleague from Canada mentioned a list of organizations and forums which have criticized the South Asian tests. We were not a member of most of these organizations, of the Security Council in particular. I must say we were appalled at the fact that the Council could adopt a decision of such far-reaching import for the security of a State without even fully consulting that State. We are a sovereign country with legitimate national security interests, and we do not accept such treatment. We have therefore rejected Security Council resolution 1172 (1998), and we will continue to reject that resolution because it is unjust and unacceptable.

My colleague from Canada forgot to mention one forum which has also spoken about these tests, the largest forum with the largest membership among all the forums he mentioned. The Non-Aligned summit at Durban adopted a decision which referred to the South Asian tests. That reference was a balanced one that took into account the history of the past, current developments and the future, and I believe that it was a responsible decision adopted after many hours of negotiations, at the level of heads of State, among countries with very different views and interests. We have accepted that decision and are prepared to work towards the normalization of the situation in South Asia on the basis of the approach that is outlined in the Durban summit decision.

My colleague from Canada said that this is a draft resolution that focuses specifically on South Asia and therefore that is all it should deal with. I have two points. First, if it focuses on South Asia, why is it called "Nuclear testing"? Why not "South Asia", why not "The danger of nuclear weapons from South Asia"? It is called "Nuclear testing". It is very similar to a resolution adopted two years ago which did not name anybody, did not refer to any previous resolutions, did not refer to any country and only deplored in very general terms the tests that were conducted then. Why the difference in treatment now? I shall not harp on that point.

If it does focus on South Asia, then it must be a resolution that contributes to the problem that is created in South Asia. It cannot be a responsible resolution if it merely puts on the table a condemnation and expects countries just to accept it. Where would you lead us from here, after having condemned these tests in the General Assembly? Would you lead us backward to the point where we started these tests, where we did not accept the agenda that had been set out *ex parte* in Security council resolution 1172 (1998), or would you lead us to a point where our heads of State have made responsible statements on this issue in the General Assembly, where we are engaged in a dialogue with major Powers, where we are engaged in a bilateral dialogue in South Asia and where we are seeking to promote peace and stability through these dialogues? Should you point us in that direction, or should you point us backward to the point where you wish to condemn us once again? If you condemn us, how can you talk to us? If you think that coercion is the road to bring us to a point of responsibility, then how do you expect us to enter into a responsible dialogue designed to promote stability and peace in South Asia?

You cannot have it both ways. You cannot make us a target and a partner. You cannot say that we condemn you but we expect you to behave well. We are not tame dogs on a leash. We are responsible sovereign States and we expect to be treated as such. Draft resolution L.22 will be opposed strongly by my delegation, as will any other draft that is based on this discriminatory approach. My delegation reserves the right to move amendments to this draft resolution, and we shall do so. We expect and hope that all those fair-minded countries, especially our fellow members of the Non-Aligned Movement, will not support this discriminatory draft resolution.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to comment on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.16, entitled "Reducing nuclear danger", introduced by the representative of India. We have some problems with it.

First, it is my impression that almost all its contents have already been reflected in other draft resolutions, such as those on nuclear disarmament, security guarantees for non-nuclear States and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Those resolutions are more comprehensive and more detailed. Therefore my delegation cannot but conclude that it does not seem necessary to submit this draft resolution, which repeats the contents of others.

Secondly, it is known to all that nuclear danger is not confined to nuclear weapons but also includes nuclear-weapons proliferation and even incidents at civilian nuclear facilities. The latter two factors are just as likely to increase nuclear danger. Since draft resolution L.16 specially concerns the reduction of nuclear danger, it should logically include all aspects of the reduction of nuclear danger, but the sponsor limits the contents to the danger of nuclear weapons only. Even so it wittingly or unwittingly omits other aspects such as nuclear-weapons proliferation. Obviously the draft is not comprehensive enough.

Thirdly, it should particularly be pointed out that operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution generally requests Member States to

> "provide the Secretary-General information on the measures undertaken towards implementation of this resolution or efforts undertaken by them to promote the objectives envisaged in this resolution".

This cannot but bring to mind the background situation in which in May this year, having blatantly conducted nuclear tests, the sponsor declared itself a nuclear-weapon State but was resolutely rejected by the international community. As a result it inevitably arouses people's concern as to the real intent of the sponsor in producing this draft resolution.

I think delegations have all noticed the formulation used by the representative of India when he was introducing draft resolution L.16, that is, the so-called five NPT nuclear-weapon States. One is tempted to ask, apart from NPT nuclear-weapon States, are there any non-NPT nuclear-weapon States or other types of nuclear-weapon States? In a word, if L.16 is used as a vehicle by a certain country to demonstrate that it has the status of a nuclear-weapon State, I believe that this is something that the international community would definitely not support.

Mr. Becher (Israel): As this is my first time addressing the Committee I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, together with the members of the Bureau, and assure you of our continuing full cooperation.

As in recent years the draft resolution entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East" is once again submitted by Egypt, though it is at best redundant and in fact inflammatory. Moreover, the language of the draft this year is more severe when compared with last year's resolution.

The political motivation behind it is clearly indicated by the singling out of Israel. It should be noted here that no other draft resolution, even the new draft on nuclear testing, mentions any single Member State by name. In addition, the risk resolution focuses entirely on one region while ignoring nuclear proliferation in others. It also neglects the fact that the real risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East emanates from countries which, despite being parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, are engaged in ongoing efforts to acquire nuclear capabilities.

Many developments have occurred in the nuclear realm in the Middle East in recent years: the sombre experience gained by the United Nations Special Commission, the action team of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Iraq, other dangerous proliferation efforts in our region and other current events known only too well to the General Assembly. None of these developments involved Israel. On the contrary, Israel has never been a threat to any of its neighbours, nor has it acted in defiance of international norms. In fact, Israel has always demonstrated the responsibility commensurate with the sensitivity of the nuclear domain.

The draft resolution also creates an imbalance. It singles out Israel negatively even as Israel is simultaneously called upon to join the consensus on the nuclear-weapon-free zone draft resolution. The adoption of such a resolution would move us to reconsider our position regarding the resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

Draft resolutions of this sort serve only to complicate efforts to build trust and confidence among the parties to the Middle East peace process, such as the Wye Memorandum just recently signed by Israel and the PLO, and thus may hinder its progress.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to make a few comments on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50, introduced by South Africa, related to the convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Of course my delegation fully supports the draft resolution, but we would still like to clarify a few points to make sure that our position is sufficiently clear. We are concerned about the fact that since 1994, for the past four years, in other words, we have been discussing and adopting by consensus a draft resolution which in practical terms is taking us nowhere, since there is as yet no agreement on the contents, the procedural elements, the format, or anything relating to the convening of a conference that we consider to be of extraordinary importance.

From the preambular language of draft resolution L.50 one derives the conviction that the convening is particularly useful and desirable. For example, in the third preambular paragraph we are bearing in mind the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament. We all know full well that subsequent sessions did not produce a final document. In the 20 years between 1978 and 1998 it is as if nothing happened on the international scene, despite the enormous, dramatic and drastic changes that occurred on this scene, with the actual realignment of some countries and the birth of new ones — in short, a change of truly crucial importance. In this sense, we consider that the statement by the Austrian representative on behalf of the European Union on the need to convene such a conference was extremely important, bearing in mind, *inter alia*, the very significant changes that have taken place.

My delegation also considers that the only logical, systematic and inherently balanced way of approaching the issue of disarmament within the context of this fourth special session is in the manner described in the antepenultimate preambular paragraph of L.50, which emphasizes multilateralism. We cannot continue to act within a strictly bilateral context where possible resolution by means of agreement is on the basis of two Powers taking decisions while the rest of the world is absent, or at least is not directly linked to any bilateral conventions.

There are two basic conceptual elements my delegation would like to emphasize: first, the dramatic and decisive change on the international scene, and secondly, the fact that in light of the new elements which threaten the security of States, elements which by their very nature are transnational, a multilateral approach and emphasis is needed to deal with the change, which implies that all States should be represented so that they can express their points of view and find solutions.

Merely from the bureaucratic point of view we have a positive signal that cannot be ignored, namely, the recent creation of the Department for Disarmament Affairs within the Secretariat, which is a reflection of the collective feeling that has not yet translated into the actual convening of a conference. We are therefore concerned that it is not enough to adopt — almost automatically, mechanically, in a linear fashion — a draft resolution by consensus. Of course we will continue to strive for its adoption by consensus, but there has to be some action so that the conference will finally materialize.

To this effect my delegation considers that it is very important to highlight two concerns, one of which we have already mentioned. First, there would possibly be financial implications of holding a conference if it did not produce a solid, coherent document that would constitute a new step forward in the context to which we have already referred, and thus enable us to work together in the future.

Secondly, we are concerned at the possible financial implications of the conference. However — and my delegation wishes to emphasize this aspect very emphatically — every day we are more convinced of the need to hold the conference. We cannot continue to live in a world which, as it were, is not taking due note of what is happening, for example, the tremendous technological changes that are occurring on the world stage and affecting the disarmament process. In passing, we consider quite useful the draft resolution presented by the Russian Federation on the implications of technological and scientific changes and aspects of disarmament.

There is no doubt that the world has changed completely. There have been radical scientific, technological, cultural and political changes as well as changes also in the world's composition with the appearance of new actors in international society, including non-governmental organizations and other actors which now have a certain legal status and are also subject to international law. So we must tackle seriously and consistently the convening of this conference.

One solution we might suggest is that between now and the next meeting of the Disarmament Commission an informal group for consultations could be set up, nothing that would be binding, but a forum in which work could be done and certain basic terms of reference could be devised in order to break the stalemate in which we now find ourselves. On the one hand we keep saying we want to convene a conference, while on the other we are told we cannot hold a conference because there is no agenda, and yet we cannot agree on a minimum agenda. For my delegation, this means that it is essential to find ways and means to elicit support from everyone. We do not have to give such a body a mandate beyond acting as an informal group to establish those terms of reference.

My delegation wanted to make these clarifications known and wishes to reiterate its fullest support for draft resolution L.50 introduced by South Africa.

Mr. Laptsenak (Belarus): On behalf of the sponsors — Barbados, Bolivia, Bahamas, Congo, Fiji, Malawi, Mali and my own delegation — I should like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23, entitled "Regional disarmament", submitted under agenda item 71 (q), "General and complete disarmament: regional disarmament".

The preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution refer to the well-established principles of nuclear-weapon-free zones, noting at the same time the need to have due regard to the specificity of the regions concerned, as well as to the role of such endeavours in promoting regional and global security.

In particular, the second preambular paragraph welcomes the existing treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America, Asia and Africa, and similar initiatives. The third preambular paragraph refers to the sovereign resolve of the States of the region concerned to contribute to, and benefit from, the new European security architecture. The amendments proposed to these paragraphs reflect the position of those countries which are considering the possibility of joining the countries supportive of draft resolution L.23. In this regard we had informal consultations on this draft resolution with the eight countries interested and concerned.

The fourth preambular paragraph is a factual reflection of the major positive developments in the European region resulting from the historic events of the past few years, leading to an enhancement of the atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and partnership among European States. As a result of that, nuclear weapons, as is well known, were withdrawn from the territories of three States, one of which is my country, Belarus. The fourth preambular paragraph is a statement that has been present in a number of resolutions and United Nations documents in recent years. What is important, and I deem it appropriate to underline it here in the First Committee, is the consequences of those developments. Nuclear weapons are no longer stationed on the territories of Central and Eastern European States. That is an unprecedented, positive development that meets the security requirements beyond the frontiers of Europe and gives inspiration to all Member States representing other geographic regions.

The fifth preambular paragraph is a reference to the statement of the Ministerial North Atlantic Council Meeting, confirmed by the heads of State or Government of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries, regarding the so-called three nos. Together with the third preambular paragraph, the sixth preambular paragraph reflects the statements made recently by the Eastern European States, in particular in the Conference on Disarmament last summer.

The operative paragraphs are an appeal to consolidate the level of security achieved in the region concerned. Thus operative paragraph 1 urges all the concerned States to exert efforts to continue making it possible to have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of the non-nuclear States of the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

Operative paragraph 2 calls upon all States of Central and Eastern Europe and other States concerned to continue to abide by their nuclear non-proliferation obligations under existing multilateral and bilateral agreements.

Finally, operative paragraph 3 invites the General Assembly to consider implementation of the resolution at its fifty-fifth session under the item entitled "General and complete disarmament".

As can be seen from the text, draft resolution L.23 is based on the factual situation that has emerged in the region concerned in recent years and on the measures of practical nuclear disarmament undertaken by a number of the member States of the region and on the declarations made by other States, including those made by the official representatives of a regional arrangement. Given the importance of the subject matter, the sponsors urge the Committee to adopt draft resolution L.23 with the widest possible support, if not by consensus.

Mr. Wyzner (Poland): In connection with draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23 submitted to the Committee by the delegation of Belarus under agenda item 71 (q), "Regional disarmament" and just introduced by the representative of Belarus, I have the honour to make a statement on behalf of 12 like-minded States from the region of Central and Eastern Europe, namely, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Despite the lack of clarity in the structure of the Belorussian document, which does not help us understand its purpose, and in the light of previous similar initiatives and recent statements by the delegation of Belarus, most notably during the general debate of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly and its First Committee, we cannot but conclude that draft resolution L.23 is yet another manifestation of the desire of the delegation of Belarus to pursue the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe.

The above-mentioned 12 countries, either collectively or individually, and on many occasions, have already expressed their favourable attitude towards creating nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world, recognizing them as important instruments complementary to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Appreciating the role that nuclear-weapon-free zones can play in promoting regional and global peace and security, they welcome the treaties hitherto concluded in this respect.

At the same time, they continue to believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones must not interfere with existing or evolving security arrangements to the detriment of regional and international security, or otherwise adversely affect the inalienable right to individual or collective self-defence guaranteed under the United Nations Charter.

In this connection they consider that the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe as promoted now by Belarus is incompatible with their sovereign resolve to contribute to and benefit from the new European security architecture, one that is based, *inter alia*, upon the principles of democracy, civilian control over the military, good-neighbourly relations as well as cooperation with, and accession to, the Euro-Atlantic structures, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union.

It is the view of the above-mentioned countries that internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones can be established only on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. Consequently, in the absence of such an arrangement among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the idea promoted by Belarus to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region does not meet the principal criterion that would allow for its consideration.

At the same time they wish to reaffirm their commitment to the NPT and the international nuclear non-proliferation regime as a whole. They therefore consider the calls addressed to them to continue to abide by their nuclear non-proliferation obligations as redundant and out of place, and they see no justification for singling out their region in this respect. In doing so, they strongly reject any implicit suggestions which call into question their non-proliferation commitments.

In conclusion, without prejudice to a possible future relevance of the idea of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central and Eastern Europe, the above-mentioned 12 countries wish clearly to reiterate their lack of interest in any further deliberations on the Belorussian initiative and urge the delegation of that country to withdraw the draft resolution that it has submitted to the Committee. It is their conviction that, in view of the lack of agreement of the majority of States at the regional level to create such a zone, it would be inappropriate to take up this issue at the United Nations General Assembly.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): It is now 6 p.m. We have asked for a 15-minute extension. We still have four speakers and I still have to inform the Committee of the draft resolutions that will be looked at tomorrow.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): It had been my intention to take the floor with regard to the introduction of draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.49 and L.16. However, given the debate that has also taken place with regard to draft resolution L.22, the nuclear testing draft resolution, and the comments with regard to the position of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), I feel it is incumbent upon me to make a few remarks in that regard as well.

I note that the positions adopted by the heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement in Durban were correctly characterized by the representative of Pakistan, in that the NAM heads of State or Government intend to take a positive approach to the nuclear testing issue in South Asia. But I would also emphasize that the view expressed by the NAM heads of State or Government during the summit was based, in their words, on a recollection of their principled positions on nuclear disarmament and the related issues of nuclear proliferation and nuclear tests.

The "in principle" position of the heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement can be found in the 1995 Cartagena summit document, paragraph 90, in which they firmly rejected all kinds of nuclear testing and supported the total elimination of nuclear testing without any exception.

I turn now to draft resolution L.49, which was introduced last week. My delegation takes the floor to express some concern about the language in operative paragraph 6 of that resolution. We would certainly encourage delegations to look closely at that language, particularly as compared to very similar language that appeared in operative paragraph 9 of the same resolution submitted for the consideration of the General Assembly last year.

In the language of operative paragraph 6 this year we were concerned to note that the drafters of this year's resolution have deleted the concept of continuing efforts aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons and strategic offensive arms. Paragraph 9 of resolution 52/38 M of last year reads as follows:

> "*Encourages* Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States of America to continue their cooperative efforts aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons and strategic offensive arms on the basis of existing agreements, and welcomes the contributions that other States are making to such cooperation as well;".

Delegations will notice that it is the concept of eliminating nuclear weapons that is missing from the language being submitted this year.

We believe that the deletion of this phrase from language that had previously been agreed to by the Assembly, including a positive vote from South Africa, is a matter of concern, and we encourage those drafting the resolution to reintroduce this element into their text. An argument that Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine no longer have nuclear weapons and therefore on that basis this language should not be included is fallacious, because that was also the situation when the resolution was introduced last year. We notice that operative paragraph 5 of this year's draft resolution is the same as that which appeared in previous years.

The concern I have is that the deletion of the concept of elimination of nuclear weapons, or cooperative efforts aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons, sends an unfortunate signal which, of course, is the focus of other draft resolutions, including L.48, which has been submitted to this assembly for its consideration.

I turn now to draft resolution L.16. We welcome the indication by the Indian delegation today when it was introducing the draft resolution, that they are in discussion on making certain amendments to this draft resolution. We welcome that indication because the South African delegation has severe difficulties with operative paragraph 2 as currently drafted. Operative paragraph 2

> "*Requests* Member States to provide the Secretary-General information on the measures undertaken towards implementation of this resolution"

and, secondly

> "or efforts undertaken by them to promote the objectives envisaged in this resolution".

By our own analysis of the draft resolution we believe, and I think it is quite evident from the language, that the only States among the Member States that are in a position to provide the Secretary-General with information on measures undertaken towards implementation of this resolution would be States possessing nuclear weapons. There are no other States that could implement measures such as no first use, negative security assurances, de-targeting and such, which are listed in the draft resolution, although others could certainly promote the objectives and be supportive.

The way this paragraph is phrased at present — and I agree here with the representative of China — is that it opens the door for recognition of States possessing nuclear weapons. South Africa, as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and a State which itself destroyed nuclear weapons to join that Treaty, would regard it as a very serious development if we were to support an initiative that opens the door for the recognition of any States other than the States that we are forced to accept under the NPT, that is, the five nuclear-weapon States. All our activities, as indicated by draft resolution L.48 on a new agenda, which was submitted by

South Africa together with other partners, are aimed not only at reducing nuclear weapons to zero but also at trying to get rid of nuclear-weapon States — and certainly not adding more of them.

On that basis we would like to thank the delegation of India for the welcome indication that it is looking at amendments to this draft resolution that would make it more acceptable to the participants of this assembly.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We still have seven speakers. In view of the time I will ask you to be as brief and laconic as possible.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): It was not the intention of the delegation of Egypt to speak, but the representative of Israel has delivered a statement that deserves correction. I have known him for a while and have known him to be accurate, and I was therefore rather surprised to learn that he referred to Egypt introducing draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21. I have seen him here since 3 p.m., and I introduced L.21/Rev.1, not L.21.

Secondly, I should like to invite him to take the floor once again to explain to us where he finds the draft resolution — and I quote his words — "more severe in comparison with last year's resolution".

I feel compelled to refer to the intervention by the representative of Israel as he once again, and frankly to our regret, attempts to uphold his theory of delusion while commenting on the draft resolution entitled "Risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East". To him and to those who ask the question "Why is the draft resolution focusing on the Middle East and ignoring serious developments in other regions?", we say that Arab countries in the Middle East have indeed met their promises and acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). They have honoured their commitments and renounced the nuclear option. They have placed all their activities, if any, under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. Despite all that they remain under an imminent threat from Israel, which refuses to accede to, or even show a commitment to join, the NPT. Israel continues to refuse to negotiate or even discuss the nuclear issue in any kind of forum.

We may get into hypothetical or even conceptual arguments on the fundamental differences between the region of South Asia and the Middle East. Conceptually we may argue there is no parity in our region and that in terms of obligation and responsibilities and records vis-à-vis the NPT all countries of the Middle East have taken solid steps except Israel, and that the application of an enhanced and more rigorous IAEA verification mechanism, "93+2", will soon be signed as additional protocols by all countries in the Middle East, with Israel outside this regime. Why? Because it refuses full-scope safeguards.

Again, we also fundamentally differ with the argument he puts that Israel has never been a threat to any of its neighbours, an argument which is once again employed in a renewed attempt at distortion. The argument itself is self-defeating. Allow me to furnish some salient but compelling questions, historical in nature, in order to straighten the facts before the Committee and so as to put them in the right perspective when pondering and reflecting upon them.

I list these questions. Why were the nuclear forces of the then two super-Powers in the 1973 war placed on a nuclear alert — particularly Defcon 3? Was it not because of an Israeli nuclear threat?

Another question: is an aging Dimona a threat? What about the contaminating effects of the release of radioactive waste from storage facilities closing the gardens surrounding Dimona several times. Is that not a threat? How did we know all about that? Not from Arab public opinion but from Israeli public opinion and media. May I recommend and invite the attention of the representative of Israel to a book recently published by an Israeli scholar, Abner Cohen, entitled *The Quiet Bomb*. It is hoped this piece of work will help to identify areas of lacuna and to comprehend the anxiety of both Israeli and Arab public opinion.

What is the effect — if I may add to the list of questions — of recent seismological activities and earthquakes on the nuclear structure inside Israel? We would all be better off if reassurances came from the competent international authority, the IAEA. Is that possible? How will that affect underground water resources? Is it not opportune now that the international community should take up the question of nuclear safety inside Israel? Indeed one fails to understand how some can severely condemn and take strong action against one proliferator while all but condoning the actions of another. One also fails to understand how a country can claim to be seeking a just peace in the Middle East while at the same time insisting on maintaining its ability to annihilate its neighbours with more than 200 nuclear weapons.

The draft resolution on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is in fact an understatement. The truth of the matter is that we should not remain complacent by voicing concerns over a risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East if this risk situation is not quickly addressed.

To the representative of Israel I say that there are no in-betweens. There are no grey areas. There are no attenuating circumstances and there is absolutely no substitute for righteousness which I recommend to the representative of Israel.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I ask all representatives to make an effort to be brief.

Ms. Kunadi (India): I will try to be very brief. At this stage I should like to take this opportunity to present our views on the cluster relating to nuclear weapons, and in particular to two draft resolutions contained in it. We have co-sponsored the Myanmar draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, document A/C.1/53/L.47, and we hope that this draft resolution will receive widespread support, as in previous years.

I turn now to draft resolution L.22, entitled "Nuclear testing", which has just been presented by the representative of Canada. We consider that this draft resolution on nuclear testing is discriminatory, distorted and completely unhelpful in respect of the objectives it seeks to address. It would only result in diverting the attention of the First Committee from its priorities. Such an effort was made at the recent General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with results that are known to all. The sponsors of the draft resolution are themselves beneficiaries of alliances or security arrangements that are underpinned by nuclear weapons, some of them through doctrines of the first use of nuclear weapons. We urge them to reflect upon the double standards inherent in their initiative.

We also wish to ask the sponsors of the draft resolution: in the more than 2000 nuclear tests conducted since the dawn of the nuclear age, how many resolutions have they moved deploring those tests? Or is it that tests by States belonging to South Asia form a separate category to which discriminatory standards must apply? Are these standards geographical, political, or something else? Or is it that the possession of nuclear weapons is acceptable for some but not for States belonging to the non-aligned? Are the States of South Asia being asked to conform to treaties without being parties to them? Should we then by the same token call for universal adherence to the Law of the Sea? If we are to talk of norms, then the norm of the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons exists in the United Nations Charter and in international humanitarian law, and is also contained in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons.

My delegation also wishes to state that a draft resolution on nuclear testing which is discriminatory and moulded in a coercive manner will be counter-productive and will vitiate the atmosphere of the First Committee and invariably impact on the forthcoming disarmament agenda. We believe, a belief shared by a large section of delegations in the Committee, that we must direct our efforts more productively and purposefully. We for our part will support efforts in that direction. The sensible course for the sponsors would be to reflect and reconsider whether it will serve any purpose to pursue this draft resolution.

In the event it is decided to press ahead, we would have no option but to table amendments to bring the text into line with generally accepted principles of nuclear disarmament, nuclear testing and non-proliferation.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to make a brief statement on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament" and introduced today by the representative of Myanmar. My delegation would like to add its voice to previous speakers who expressed their support for this draft resolution.

In fact, this initiative addresses concisely the highest priority issue on the disarmament agenda, namely, nuclear disarmament. We earnestly hope that the members of the Conference on Disarmament at the 1999 session of that body will respond constructively to the call contained in this draft resolution and establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, taking into account all relevant proposals, *inter alia*, the proposal of 28 members of the Conference on Disarmament for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

My delegation would also like to use this opportunity to express its support for the timely initiative of Malaysia in submitting the draft resolution on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), for the constructive initiative of the G-8 in submitting the draft resolution entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world", and for Mongolia's initiative on international security and its nuclear-weapon-free status. They deserve the widest possible support by members of the Committee this year.

Since I have the floor I should like to make a brief statement on draft resolution L.21/Rev.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", sponsored by Egypt on behalf of the Arab League. In the view of my delegation the content of this draft resolution is faithful to the real situation in the Middle East. It calls upon Israel, the only non-party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the region, to join this Treaty and place its unsafeguarded nuclear weapons programme under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Despite repeated calls by the General Assembly on Israel to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear-weapons programme under IAEA safeguards, there has been no change in Israel's position in this respect. We firmly believe that Israel's accession to the NPT will lead to the establishment of a zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I wish to tell the Committee that the interpreters are willing but their willingness has its limits. I call on the representative of Macedonia.

Mr. Dzundev (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I should like to make a brief statement in connection with that made by the delegation of Poland regarding draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23 submitted by the delegation of Belarus a few moments ago.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I am sorry to interrupt the representative of Macedonia, but I am responding to a point of order.

Mr. Stephanou (Greece): I should like first to congratulate you, Sir, and the members of the Bureau on behalf of my delegation. May I remind you that in accordance with Security Council resolution 817 (1993), the name of the State you mentioned for all purposes within the United Nations is "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" pending settlement of the difference that has arisen over the name of that State. This difference over the name has not yet been settled.

The Chairman: The point is well taken. I call on the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr. Dzundev (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I will not comment at this point.

The delegation of the Republic of Macedonia supports the statement of Poland on behalf of a group of 12 like-minded States, which is in accordance with their position that the declaration of nuclear-weapon-free zones should be on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the region concerned, and also with the position of my Government to become a full member of Euro-Atlantic institutions.

At the same time my delegation fully understands the efforts of Belarus to have its own position regarding nuclear disarmament. The Belarus decision to be a non-nuclear State represents a significant contribution to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons process, something highly appreciated, I believe, by all delegations in the Committee.

Mr. Al-Anbuge (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation first wishes to express its full support for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.1, which represents the absolute minimum that could be said on the issue of the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. There Israel poses the principal danger and the main cause of instability in the area because it possesses a tremendous well-known arsenal of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Secondly, all that has been said by the representative of this entity against my country is false, the same fabrications that he echoes every year before this Committee. Here I wish to reaffirm what I said on 20 October this year about Iraq meeting its obligations under resolution 687 (1991) in the field of disarmament, among which is nuclear disarmament.

That representative aims to escape obligations pursuant to international treaties and conventions in force in the field of disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament. Therefore, the attempt could be described as an abysmal failure, the aim of which is well known to everyone.

Mr. Laptsenak (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): I should like to say that this repetition is confirmation of the important contribution made over the past year by Belarus in the field of nuclear disarmament. I have particular satisfaction in saying this because the reasons for my statement will be understood very promptly.

It is very pleasant to us that the initiative my country has been presenting for some time, the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free space in Central and Eastern Europe — and I repeat, a "space", not a "zone" — is something very specific that we have explained in a number of occasions in a number of different forums and to various delegations. This initiative was confirmed and has become stronger. It has conquered and won over the minds of delegations.

I should like to emphasize that the draft resolution presented by Belarus and other States in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which enjoys the support of a consider number of members present here in this room today, also covers other items. It not only refers to a space without nuclear weapons, but has a somewhat different emphasis. It seems to us that it is well worth drawing the attention of those present here to this point, particularly the attention of delegations that have joined the statement made by the representative of Poland.

I very much welcome this opportunity to respond to what has been said by States referring to draft resolution L.23. On the agenda of the General Assembly there are a vast number of questions which sometimes go into specific detail — the strengthening of positive tendencies in certain parts of the world and action that is oriented towards preventing new situations of conflict that might threaten the achievements that have been attained in terms of balance and international security. Let us look at draft resolution L.23, which we have had the honour of introducing and bringing to the attention of delegations.

In the preambular paragraphs we see recognition of the positive part played by the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We refer specifically to the treaties that have been signed on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and similar initiatives in the respective regions. We emphasize the importance of the specific characteristics of each region. We may of course wish to refute the importance of specific characteristics, but what does that prove? In the preamble, as I have said, we note with a positive intent the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba and the Almaty Declaration on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and similar initiatives in the respective regions. Could taking note in this manner be taken to be respect for the positive contribution of these efforts? Could this in any way be considered to be non-constructive? If one places in doubt the positive contribution of those Treaties, what avenue are we to pursue? What would those who oppose our approach suggest that we do?

In the third preambular paragraph of L.23 one will find support for the sovereign resolve of the States of Central and Eastern Europe to create a new European security architecture. The representative of Poland has said that a number of countries have qualms about L.23 and that it does not reflect that orientation towards a new European security architecture. But that is precisely what is referred to in L.23. Perhaps the approach of the countries expressing reservations on draft resolution L.23 has changed in this respect. We would then have to hear unambiguous explanations as to the alternative objectives pursued by the countries referred to in L.23 if they no longer subscribe to that third preambular paragraph.

In the tradition of the First Committee of the General Assembly, the efforts of Member States are supported when they seek self-sufficiency in terms of-defence. The same can be said for nuclear weapons. In the fourth preambular paragraph it will be seen how we express satisfaction. It says that as a result of the historic events of the past few years leading to enhancement of the atmosphere of trust, mutual respect and partnership among European States, the nuclear weapons were withdrawn from the territories of three States and currently there are no nuclear weapons stationed in the territories of Eastern and Central European States. Maybe someone disagrees with that. Someone might think that we should regret this state of affairs.

In the fifth preambular paragraph we take note of the statement of the Ministerial North-Atlantic Council Meeting on 10 December 1996, confirmed in 1997 by the heads of State or Government of countries members of regional arrangements and in a number of subsequent documents. Is something incorrect here? Have matters changed? If there have been changes we should be informed.

Can one doubt that draft resolution L.23 has a constructive approach when we are welcoming efforts to enhance stability and security in Central and Eastern Europe through building a new regional security architecture based on cooperation, shared values and without creating new dividing lines, as delegations can read in the sixth preambular paragraph.

It seems to me that my questions are replies to the comments that were made in the statement by the representative of Poland on behalf of a number of countries. It seems to us that those observations by that group were made without taking into account our draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Two names remain on the list of those who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply, the representatives of Russia and Poland. I ask them to be brief.

Mr. Abdullaev (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian):* I have asked to speak to reply to a question put by the representative of South Africa relating to draft resolution L.49, and most particularly to operative paragraph 6. But before commenting on that I should like to say that we are often accused of adopting resolutions that later vanish into thin air or remain a dead letter. This argument must be listened to, but one reason perhaps is that we adopt resolutions that contain provisions that are simply out of reach because they are unrealistic.

One such provision, in my opinion, could be in operative paragraph 6, where it speaks of five States — Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United States of America — cooperating in the reduction of nuclear weapons. That is not the case. A careful look at operative paragraph 5 shows that all nuclear weapons have been withdrawn from the territories of Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus. They no longer have nuclear weapons on their territories. Furthermore, they are full participants in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In these circumstances, we believe, the States concerned cannot participate in joint efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. This provision was adopted last year, but if we let a mistake go by once that does not mean we have to keep making the same mistake year after year.

As for the reduction of strategic weapons, those States are undoubtedly participating in these efforts, but in our opinion the wording now in operative paragraph 6 adequately reflects the situation. To add "nuclear weapons" here would make the draft resolution unrealistic.

Mr Wyzner (Poland): The representative of Belarus appeals to us to read his text carefully. I can assure him that all 12 — and now 13 — like-minded delegations on this draft resolution have read it very carefully. He raises semantic differences between "zone" and "space". I can only point to the fact that his text begins with the words "recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones", not "space". We try to discuss what is in the draft resolution.

He referred to the support given by other countries to his position. The fact is that Belarus could not muster the support of a single country of the region for his draft, while I was speaking on behalf of 12 — and now obviously on behalf of 13 — countries of the region, nearly all of them.

He then referred to the fact that he has in his text some obvious things to which I think everybody around this table would subscribe, things such as welcoming the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and so on — of course we all do that — and expressing satisfaction that nuclear weapons were withdrawn from the territories of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. We all share that. But I should like respectfully to suggest that these references are already present, where they belong, in about five draft resolutions that the Committee is about to adopt on nuclear-weapon-free zones. As the representative of Russia just reminded us, references to Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine are already present in other draft resolutions where they really belong. Do we have to repeat endlessly the same things to serve some political purpose which is of course unacceptable to the countries of the region? Our answer is no.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now read out the list of draft resolutions that will be taken up tomorrow. Draft resolutions that are not mentioned are automatically those that have been deferred.

(*spoke in English*)

In cluster 1, A/C.1/53/L.3, L.14, L.19, L.21/Rev.1; cluster 2, L.6/Rev.1, L.9, L.28, L.38/Rev.1; cluster 3, L.40; cluster 4, L.7, L.41/Rev.1; and cluster 5, L.23, L.34, L.35.

(*spoke in French*)

Before adjourning this meeting I should like to thank the interpreters once again for their willingness and, for their benefit, express the hope that this will not happen again.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/53/PV.22

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

Official Records

First Committee

22nd Meeting

Tuesday, 3 November 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier . . . . (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman: In accordance with the programme of work and agreed timetable, the Committee will commence today the third stage of its work, action on all draft resolutions submitted under agenda items 63 to 80.

As I informed members of the Committee at the close of our meeting yesterday, the Committee will proceed to take a decision today on the following draft resolutions that appear in the Chairman's revised cluster paper: in cluster 1, A/C.1/53/L.3, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East"; A/C.1/53/L.14, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons"; A/C.1/53/L.19, on the consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Yesterday I said that A/C.1/53/L.21 would be voted on today. That is not now the case, as a delegation objected and asked for action on that draft resolution to be postponed.

In cluster 2, all draft resolutions will be voted on today. That means A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1, on the Biological Weapons Convention, and A/C.1/53/L.9, on the dumping of radioactive wastes.

(*spoke in French*)

I call on the representative of Brazil on a point of order.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): Among the list of draft resolutions to be voted on in cluster 1, I did not hear you, Mr. Chairman, list A/C.1/53/L.37, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas". I understood you to say yesterday that the Committee would be voting on draft resolutions in cluster 1 today, and that draft resolution is in cluster 1. In our meeting yesterday I did not hear any delegation object to its being voted on today. I kindly ask for some clarification.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Yesterday I asked all delegations wishing to postpone the voting on any draft resolutions to so inform the Secretariat. That was done for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37. Members will have heard the question asked by Brazil. Does any delegation in the room object to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 being put to the vote today? The request from Brazil is that if a delegation objects it should so state in this room.

I call on the representative of Japan.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): Our delegation asked for the postponement of action on that draft resolution because we have not yet got instructions from Tokyo.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): That I think answers Brazil's question.

I call on the representative of Brazil.

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): Of course, if delegations need some time to request instructions and to reflect upon draft resolutions, my delegation would not have any problem with that. I would just like to point out that the draft resolution on the southern hemisphere has been on the table for some weeks now, and it was my understanding that we had plenty of time to consult our capitals. Yesterday was a holiday in Brazil, and we had other important draft resolutions to vote on today. I went to my office at the end of the afternoon and had to wake up some people in Brazil to request instructions in order to be able to vote today on draft resolutions that we were expected to take action on today. But if delegations need more time, then that is fine with the delegation of Brazil. I would just like you, Mr. Chairman, to inform us when it will be possible to put the draft resolution on the southern hemisphere, in document A/C.1/53/L.37, to a vote.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 will be deferred.

I have just been told that a delegation objects to the Committee's voting today on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3. In accordance with the rules of procedure, A/C.1/53/L.3 will therefore not be put to the vote today.

Very briefly I should like to return to cluster 1. We are now left with only two draft resolutions to vote on in cluster 1. I renew my appeal to all delegations to show prudence when seeking the postponement of draft resolutions. It would be unreasonable to ask that 90 per cent of the draft resolutions in a cluster be postponed.

I call on the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Abdullah Faiz (Malaysia): My delegation is in a similar position to that of the delegation of Brazil in that it did not ask for the deferral of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45. In this regard I, too, would like to have some clarification.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): I am sorry I was not in the room, but I have been told by my colleague that you announced that a delegation has requested the deferral of action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3. Am I right in this understanding?

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): That is indeed so.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): In that case, may I ask what delegation that is. I would like to say that there are no ongoing consultations on this particular draft resolution. Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 was submitted a long time ago and was introduced under a somewhat specific and different agenda item. But, in the spirit of compromise, we will not stand in the way of that request and will honour it for 24 hours. If there is a request for a deferral of action on A/C.1/53/L.3 we will not stand in the way today but would request that you, Mr. Chairman, put that draft resolution to the vote tomorrow. I hope that within these 24 hours the delegation requesting deferral will have solved the problem that caused it to request the deferral.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French)*: We shall now proceed with the list of draft resolutions to be put to the vote today.

(spoke in English)

Under cluster 2, "Other weapons of mass destruction": we have draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1, on biological weapons; A/C.1/53/L.9, on radioactive wastes, A/C.1/53/L.28, on the Geneva Protocol, and A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1, on chemical weapons. Under cluster 3, we have draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Under cluster 4, "Conventional weapons", we have draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7, "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them", and A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1, "Illicit traffic in small arms". Finally, in cluster 5, on regional disarmament and security, we will examine today all three draft resolutions: A/C.1/53/L.23, "Regional disarmament"; A/C.1/53/L.34, "Regional disarmament"; and A/C.1/53/L.35, "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels".

Are there any comments?

Before we proceed, I should like to review once again the procedure I outlined yesterday for this stage of the Committee's work. I apologize to delegations which were present yesterday, but I shall repeat it for all delegations present today.

At the outset of each meeting delegations will have an opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions. Then I will call upon those delegations wishing to make general statements or comments on the draft resolutions in a particular cluster, other than explanations of their position or vote. Before we address draft resolutions in a particular cluster, delegations will have the opportunity to make general statements on the cluster.

Thereafter delegations may proceed to explain their position or vote on the draft resolution before a decision is taken. After the Committee has taken a decision on a draft resolution, I will call upon those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote on the draft resolution after the decision has been taken. Therefore, delegations will have two opportunities to make comments on a particular draft resolution, either before or after a vote is taken on.

In accordance with the rules of procedure, sponsors of draft resolutions are not permitted to make statements in explanation of vote. They are allowed only to make general statements at the beginning of the meeting or with regard to a new cluster. In order to avoid misunderstandings, I urge those delegations wishing to request a recorded vote on any particular draft resolution to inform the Secretariat of their intention before the Committee begins its action on any individual cluster.

With regard to any deferral of action on any draft resolution, delegations should inform the Secretariat in advance. Every effort should be made to refrain from resorting to a deferral of action. I hope that these procedures are clear to all delegations.

Are there any comments or questions?

I call on the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): A point of clarification: Mr. Chairman, when you say that delegations are requested to inform the Secretariat in advance of their wish to postpone voting on draft resolutions, are you referring to the sponsors of draft resolutions or to any delegation? It is my understanding that anyone has the right to request a postponement, but if it is not a sponsor it has to be done from the floor so that everybody knows who is asking for the deferral of a decision. That is my understanding, but perhaps you could enlighten me.

Since I have the floor, I should like to request of you and the Secretariat that the voting on the draft resolution on the southern hemisphere, document A/C.1/53/L.37, be put to a vote tomorrow.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The answer to your first question is that each and every delegation has the right to ask that a vote be deferred on any draft resolution. Each delegation has that right.

I now call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Delegations will find among their documents two important INF documents. The first one is A/C.1/53/INF/2. This document contains the additional sponsors of original draft resolutions, whether revised or original. So we can see a hard number of additional sponsors of the long list of draft resolutions. During the action period I will not read out all those additional sponsors but will only refer to this document. Therefore, from now on, if delegations want to add sponsors they should so indicate, so that we can make a list and announce them from the podium.

The second important document is A/C.1/53/INF/3. This document contains a consolidated corrigendum for draft resolutions and decisions. The purpose of all this is to try to facilitate our work and economize in the cost to the Organization, because some draft resolutions will have only very slight editorial errors requiring only slight revisions or changes. Those are the two documents I should like to draw to the attention of delegations.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Before we proceed to the vote on draft resolutions in cluster 1, does any delegation wish to introduce a revised draft resolution?

(*spoke in English*)

If not, the Committee will now proceed to take decisions on draft resolutions listed in cluster 1. I shall call first on those delegations wishing to make general statements on cluster 1.

Mr. Tongprasroeth (Thailand): Nuclear disarmament is a matter to which Thailand has always attached great importance. One essential element to help make this world a safer place for us and for future generations is to stop both vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation. However, Thailand believes that in order to achieve the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament we must go beyond the concept of non-proliferation and work together towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Hence, it is the duty both of nuclear-weapon States and of non-nuclear-weapon States to rigorously pursue sincere efforts and genuine steps towards that end. This notion, we trust, is shared by all members of the international community.

In this light, Thailand supports the various initiatives on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament which call on the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament in fulfilment of their obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. We also support the call for the cessation of further development and accumulation of nuclear stockpiles.

Thailand also fully supports the concept of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world where the parties concerned concur on such a decision. For our part, Thailand has joined others in undertaking the obligations under the NPT not to acquire nuclear weapons. We, along with nine other countries in South-East Asia, signed the Bangkok Treaty establishing the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. The Treaty entered into force on 27 March 1997, and we hope that the five nuclear-weapon States will sign and ratify the protocol to the Treaty at the earliest possible date.

With a clear conscience, and in demonstration of our commitment to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, this year Thailand has decided to co-sponsor five draft resolutions in cluster 1 related to nuclear weapons. Although these draft resolutions understandably differ from one another, what is important is that they reflect more or less the principle of nuclear disarmament, to which Thailand adheres.

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our support for these draft resolutions: A/C.1/53/L.2, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia", introduced by Kyrgyzstan; A/C.1/53/L.37 entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", introduced by Brazil; A/C.1/53/L.45, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", introduced by Malaysia; A/C.1/53/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", introduced by Myanmar; and A/C.1/53/L.48, entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", introduced by Ireland.

Apart from those draft resolutions, we also stand ready to support draft resolutions leading to the same goal of totally eliminating nuclear weapons and freeing the world from the nuclear threat.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): First, the delegation of Sri Lanka is among those that have sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, introduced by the delegation of Myanmar. Such a draft resolution was first presented to the General Assembly in 1995, a landmark year, from the perspective of the majority of us, in nuclear non-proliferation, for that was the year when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was reviewed and extended indefinitely.

The General Assembly has before it a number of draft resolutions dealing with the subject of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. This in itself is an indication of the importance attached by the international community to the subject. There are many reasons for the interest in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. One such reason is the realization that, having lived in a world bursting with nuclear weapons for more than half a century, this inhumane weapon of mass destruction should not be passed on to future generations. My delegation is in agreement with several other delegations that have pointed out during the course of our discussions that among the many draft resolutions before us, the draft resolution in document A/C.1/53/L.47 is by far the most comprehensive one before the First Committee. Most importantly, it makes an attempt to chart the road we should all take with a view to ridding the world of the most abhorrent weapon of mass destruction. For this reason, we are grateful to the delegation of Myanmar for introducing draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 and would urge all members to vote in favour of it.

Secondly, on behalf of the States members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Sri Lanka is pleased to introduce document A/C.1/53/L.52, containing amendments to the draft resolution on nuclear testing, presented in document A/C.1/53/L.22.

On 2 November the representative of Australia introduced the draft resolution on nuclear testing and in doing so explained the reasons which prompted the sponsors to submit the draft resolution. Likewise, my delegation wishes to brief representatives in the Committee on the rationale behind the amendments contained in this document.

The first amendment is in respect of the fifth preambular paragraph, which recalls Security Council resolution 1172 (1998). The title of the draft resolution is "Nuclear testing", a subject upon which the First Committee and the General Assembly, as well as other institutions such as the Conference on Disarmament, have deliberated. That being the case, the States members of SAARC are of the view that it is inappropriate to make reference only to the resolution adopted by the Security Council and ignore other resolutions adopted by more representative bodies such as the General Assembly. The amendment would recall all previous resolutions on nuclear testing adopted by the United Nations.

The second amendment is in respect of operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution. The amended version expresses concern over and deplores all nuclear tests, irrespective of the purpose for which they have been conducted. Moreover, the amendment urges the cessation of all such tests in the future.

The majority of us are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and signatories to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). However, we have recognized the fact that a number of countries are not parties to these two international instruments. It is therefore inappropriate for us to view the situation through the prism of the NPT and the CTBT only. We have to recognize the fact that there is another point of view and a real situation to deal with.

It is true that the Security Council, on 6 June this year, adopted resolution 1172 (1998) on nuclear testing. It is also true that alarm was expressed at various levels on the developments which began to unfold in May this year. However, we cannot overlook the fact that a careful examination of the situation was made by a group of eight countries soon after the nuclear testing, which is reflected in document A/53/138. Furthermore, the world's second most representative body after the General Assembly — the summit of the non-aligned countries meeting at Durban at the level of heads of State barely two months ago — having gone through a painstaking effort, made its pronouncement, which is reflected in paragraph 113 of the Final Document of the twelfth summit of the Non-Aligned Movement. This point of view was not reached in isolation from the nuclear testing referred to in the draft resolution or the pronouncements made on that testing at various forums. The relevant paragraphs of the Final Document are important, as they not only express concern at the testing but also provide a solution to the problems confronting the international community in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

In view of the above, my delegation, on behalf of the States members of SAARC, would earnestly request all members of the Committee to support the amendments in document A/C.1/53/L.52. In doing so we should bear in mind the fact that the nuclear testing referred to in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 is behind us; that many positive developments have taken place since then due to the consultations and negotiations between the two countries and other interested parties; that the political and security climate in the subcontinent has improved considerably since then; and, above all, that commitments have been made by the parties concerned to the effect that the nuclear testing we have witnessed will be the last to be conducted there. It is time for us to look with confidence to the future and not the past.

Mr. Purbo (Indonesia): Concerted international endeavours to achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament should be pursued under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating forum. We earnestly hope that the members of that forum at its 1999 session will respond constructively to the call in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 and establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, taking into account relevant proposals, *inter alia*, the one submitted by its 28 members for a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons. In this light, Indonesia supports Myanmar's draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, in document A/C.1/53/L.47.

The international community continues to call for a comprehensive approach that would lead to the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, in our view, is legally authoritative. It has placed the obligation on the nuclear-weapon States to conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. Hence, Indonesia gives its full support to Malaysia's draft resolution, document A/C.1/53/L.45.

The trend towards nuclear-weapon-free zones in recent years is evidence of the significant advancement of the cause of global non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. In this context, Indonesia supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and welcomes the decision of Mongolia to declare its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation wishes to express its opinion on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", introduced by Myanmar. My country has co-sponsored such draft resolutions for the past three years. My delegation has always supported efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament, and, once again co-sponsoring the draft resolution on this subject, we renew our support for all such efforts. In the present circumstances, marked by recent developments in South Asia, we feel this is particularly appropriate.

In the draft resolution the co-sponsors are trying to express a long-held desire of the international community, which adopted the first resolution on nuclear disarmament in 1948. The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation (NPT) of Nuclear Weapons in 1995, the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by more than 150 States to date and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* of 8 July 1996, which unanimously reaffirmed that all States are obligated to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control — all these developments clearly express the will of the international community in this regard.

Though the NPT, an important legal disarmament instrument, has often been criticized for its imperfections and its discriminatory regime, and despite the lack of results from the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference, Algeria and the other sponsors of this initiative, which we think is the most comprehensive one, wishes faithfully to express its view of nuclear disarmament as reflected and reaffirmed recently by the non-aligned countries at their summit meeting in Durban.

Our co-sponsorship of this draft resolution reflects our view of nuclear disarmament. Algeria today wishes to say that the possession of nuclear weapons can no longer be justified. Laboratory simulations must cease, and the argument of nuclear deterrence is baseless. The establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, as requested in paragraph 9 of the draft resolution, is in our opinion an important step towards achieving collective security without excluding anyone out and a world as free of nuclear weapons as it was before 1945.

Algeria, having made a proposal in Geneva along these lines, today wishes to express its satisfaction that the Conference on Disarmament has found consensus and reached an understanding on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on fissile materials. That is why we call on all delegations to give wholehearted and unanimous support to this draft resolution, which we think is the most comprehensive and best reflects our concerns.

I am also pleased to say that my delegation supports and is a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45, on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the use of nuclear weapons, which was introduced by Malaysia. We also call for unanimous and wholehearted support for this draft resolution.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): I welcome this opportunity to give our support to the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament", document A/C.1/53/L.47, introduced to the Committee by the representative of Myanmar. In our view, the draft resolution deals with an issue which deserves the highest priority: the question of nuclear disarmament. The draft presented, among other things, places emphasis on two important aspects: a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and comprehensiveness.

As a sponsor of this draft resolution, my delegation honestly desires that the draft be adopted with overwhelming support, if not by consensus.

Mongolia's endeavour to achieve single-State nuclear-weapon-free status seems to be a new concept that certainly merits due consideration. Since this idea is in conformity with the declaration on principles of international law concerning friendly relations and cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, it is the wish of my delegation that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", be adopted by acclamation.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to take this opportunity to refer briefly to three draft resolutions in cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons".

Cuba considers that the draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, A/C.1/53/L.47, sponsored by Myanmar, is one of the most important texts that the General Assembly will be adopting this year. We are co-sponsoring A/C.1/53/L.47 because we think it faithfully reflects Cuba's position on this subject.

It is important to point out that the draft resolution reiterates the highest priority accorded to nuclear disarmament in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly. It recognizes the complementary nature of bilateral and multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, as well as the fact that bilateral negotiations should never be allowed to replace multilateral negotiations on this subject. The

Conference on Disarmament must, as a matter of priority, establish a special committee on nuclear disarmament to begin negotiations on a gradual global programme of nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons within a fixed time-frame.

Another important matter that the Committee will be taking up in this cluster is the conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. If we want to have effective international arrangements to give the so-called negative guarantees, then those guarantees must not be discriminatory or subject to conditions. My delegation appeals to all States, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to try to agree on a common formula to be negotiated at the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation is convinced that a multilateral agreement that is binding and universal prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would contribute to the elimination of the nuclear threat and would create a climate propitious for negotiations leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Finally, we wish to refer to the draft resolution on the Treaty of Tlatelolco, document A/C.1/53/L.19, an important text that Cuba has decided to co-sponsor once again this year. Cuba recognizes that the Treaty of Tlatelolco is of historic importance in efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and promote international peace and security. For reasons outside the control of my country, Cuba has been unable to accede fully to this Treaty. When we signed the Treaty in 1995, the Government of Cuba said,

> "The obstacles that have so far prevented the full accession of the Republic of Cuba to the Treaty of Tlatelolco are still present and continue to affect Cuban security. The only nuclear Power in this part of the world, the United States of America, has maintained a policy of hostility against Cuba."

That policy, far from diminishing, has been intensifying since that time, with new hostile acts being committed against my country.

We hope that this year the draft resolutions to which I have referred will receive maximum support from delegations.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I have sought the floor to offer the comments of my delegation on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status". It is our conviction that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the countries of the region concerned and nuclear-weapon-free countries in various parts of the world constitutes an effective measure to prevent the geographic proliferation of nuclear weapons and contributes to the advancement of the cause of nuclear disarmament.

In this connection, Mongolia has taken the commendable and bold step of declaring its territory a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries, at the Durban non-aligned summit meeting in September this year, welcomed and supported Mongolia's initiative to institutionalize its single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone. Myanmar is an ardent supporter of the establishment of such nuclear-weapon-free zones, both multi-State and single-State. Accordingly, I welcome and support Mongolia's decision to establish on its territory a single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We hope that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1 will enjoy the widest possible support of the Member States of the United Nations and that it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Seibert (Germany): With regard to cluster 1, I wish to express Germany's strong commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, a process that requires unilateral, bilateral and multilateral efforts. That is why Germany has co-sponsored draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.49, introduced by Russia and the United States, and A/C.1/53/L.42, introduced by Japan.

The agenda for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is set out in the principles and objectives of the 1995 Review and Extension and Conference. The first major achievement on this road was the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We strongly support draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.11, introduced by Australia, Mexico and New Zealand, which calls upon States to contribute to its entry into force at the earliest possible date.

The next step, long overdue, is the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty. Germany strongly supports draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.24, on fissile material cut-off negotiations, introduced by Canada. Such negotiations and a resulting fissile material cut-off treaty would constitute a major contribution both to nuclear disarmament and to nuclear non-proliferation.

The draft resolution before us is factual and faithfully reflects the decisions taken on the subject this year by the Conference on Disarmament. It does not prejudge in any way the substance of future negotiations. We therefore hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus and that delegations will refrain from introducing controversial elements. Such elements should be addressed in the course of negotiations and not in the First Committee. Germany hopes that substantive negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty will begin immediately at the outset of next year's Conference on Disarmament session.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): May I point out to delegations that one delegation has asked for the postponement of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40, on prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Tomorrow the Committee will be taking up draft resolutions in clusters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, and we will also be taking up, if there are no objections and at the specific request of two delegations, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", and A/C.1/53/L.37, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas". I have also just been told that A/C.1/53/L.10, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", can be taken up tomorrow.

In order to make it possible for the First Committee to work as efficiently as possible, may I draw the attention of delegations to the following rules. If delegations wish to postpone action on a draft resolution they must inform the Secretariat the day before the scheduled voting. Otherwise, it will be impossible to accede to such a request on the day of the voting. We cannot ask delegations to bow to last-minute requests, especially not just before the voting, as has happened today. If representatives wish a postponement of voting scheduled for, say, tomorrow, then that must be made known today before 6 p.m. If there is no such request regarding a given draft resolution, then that draft resolution will be put to the vote tomorrow.

I remind delegations that tomorrow we will be taking up in cluster 1, draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.3, A/C.1/53/L.10 and A/C.1/53/L.37, as well as all the draft resolutions in clusters 6 to 10.

I call on the representative of Pakistan on a point of order.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I apologize for interrupting my colleague from Japan. May I raise a question about the procedure that has just been outlined by you, Mr. Chairman, with regard to the possible postponement of action on draft resolutions. I understand that there is a 24-hour rule to the effect that when a new draft resolution or amendment is presented, any delegation has the right to ask for a 24-hour postponement in order to receive instructions.

At the same time, with many draft resolutions that are in the process of negotiation, it may not be possible sometimes to decide until the last minute whether or not such draft resolutions will be put to the vote. Suppose negotiations do not succeed and delegations request a postponement of the voting. I think that our rules of procedure allow the possibility of such a postponement. We must retain that flexibility and not resort to a mechanical process which will stall the process of negotiations, a natural part of the voting process in the Committee. I just wished to bring that to your attention, Mr. Chairman, and I hope that that is the understanding on which we will be proceeding.

The Chairman: What I explained is not in contradiction of what you have just said. If there is a new draft resolution or a new revision, then representatives have the 24-hour rule applied. There is no problem about that. If there are consultations, delegations can just ask for a postponement, but I ask delegations to ask for a postponement in case of doubt so that we know how many and what draft resolutions will be put to a vote the next day. In case of doubt in ongoing consultations among delegations, then delegations should just inform us that they want a postponement. That is just to allow an orderly way of working in the Committee. That does not cancel the right of any delegation to ask for a postponement.

I call on the representative of south Africa.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): I wish to speak in support of the representative of Pakistan. It is my understanding also that if consultations are continuing on a draft resolution, then at any time a delegation — and it can be any delegation in this room and not necessarily a sponsor — can ask for a delay of the voting. That would also be the case if a delegation, for example, had not yet received final instructions for the voting. The proposal that you, Mr. Chairman, have made we could possibly make the preferred option, but it would create difficulties in the Committee if it were to be made a firm rule. If a delegation wishes to request a delay in the voting on a draft resolution it would be difficult and improper and would place delegations in a very difficult position if they were unable to have their request granted — even if that request were made on the day of the voting. We could, of course, ask such delegations to try to limit that practice to the absolute minimum. I say that while knowing full well that the South African delegation has no intention of asking for a delay of any vote. We have no instructions along those lines, and we have received full instructions. But in all fairness it was necessary for me to support the representative of Pakistan.

The main point I wish to make is that while I agree with you, Mr. Chairman, that that should be the preferred option, I do not think it is a rule that can be enforced if delegations find themselves in that difficult position.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I should like to repeat what I said after the statement made by Pakistan. If delegations are engaged in negotiations and consider that they will not be in a position to vote the following day, then delegations should inform the Secretariat that they want a deferral. That does not in any way prevent delegations from asking for a deferral on the previous day. What I would like is that by 6 p.m. on the day before, we should be informed of requests for deferral so that the Chair and other delegations will have an idea of what will be put to the vote the following day. Of course, the right to seek deferral and the 24-hour rule if there is a new text are not affected by what I have proposed.

I now call on the representative of Japan to introduce a revised draft resolution.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I wish to introduce, on behalf of the 49 sponsors, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, entitled "Small arms" under cluster 4. I begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the additional sponsors that have signed the sponsors' list since the introduction of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13.

I introduced the original draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13 on 28 October. Since then we have received some comments on the draft resolution. The revisions in A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1 are the outcome of intensive consultations among interested delegations and the sponsors. I wish to express my sincere appreciation for their valuable contributions and flexibility.

In this revision some changes are made in the text. We have made the text clearer, more practical and more consistent, especially in operative paragraphs 3 (a) and (b). Furthermore, we deleted the last two lines of the original operative paragraph 5, referring to a database, the mention of which in A/C.1/53/L.13 was considered by a number of delegations to be premature.

These are the revisions proposed for the original draft resolution in document A/C.1/53/L.13. It is the wish of the sponsors that this revised draft resolution, A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, should command the overwhelming support of the Committee.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic on a point of order.

Mr. Bjarme (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to return to the point made by the representatives of Pakistan and South Africa. I wish to say that there are some draft resolutions, as the representative of South Africa explained, that call for time because of the delicate nature of the topic.

Your decision, Mr. Chairman, on our method of work is strict and severe and does not correspond to the rules of procedure. You have asked that we make requests for deferral 24 hours in advance. Some countries experience difficulty in getting instructions. Given that the voting on all draft resolutions will be completed on the 13 November, if we finish all the clusters tomorrow, what will we be doing between then and the 13th? That is why we ask the Chair to be more flexible so as to give delegations more time because these decisions are basically political ones.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I should like to repeat once again, so that everyone is clear; if delegations are not ready, we are asking them to inform us the previous day. If there is any doubt they should tell us the previous day. That is in order to make it possible for us to proceed in an orderly manner. If delegations have any doubts, or have no instructions, or are engaged in negotiations, please let us know. That is all the Chair seeks from delegations.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on the various draft resolutions. The first draft resolution to be voted on is A/C.1/53/L.14, under agenda item 72 (e), and is entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons".

(*spoke in English*)

I first call on the representative of China, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): In the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons", the Chinese delegation will abstain. The reasons for China's position are as follows.

China has always stood for the comprehensive prohibition and total destruction of all nuclear weapons. On the basis of that fundamental position, China has no difficulty with the substance of this draft resolution and has voted in favour of such resolutions in the past. However, since the beginning of this year there have been changes in the situation relating to the draft resolution in question. The sponsors of the draft resolution have for years been championing nuclear disarmament and have stood for the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless — despite the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the international community's consensus support for nuclear non-proliferation and the prohibition of nuclear tests — last May one of the sponsors conducted nuclear tests in a blatant fashion, proclaiming itself to be a nuclear State. In view of the contradiction between the action and the advocacy of the sponsor, the incongruousness of its words and deeds, we cannot but have doubts about the sincerity of that sponsor. Therefore, the Chinese delegation will abstain in the voting on this draft resolution.

The Chairman: If no other delegation wishes to explain its position or vote before action is taken, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14.

A separate, recorded vote on the eighth preambular paragraph has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to the voting on the eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" was introduced by the representative of India at the 18th meeting, on 29 October 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2. The Republic of the Congo has also become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Chile, Cyprus, Ecuador, Georgia, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, San Marino, Ukraine

The eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14 was retained by 72 votes to 38, with 18 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Sri Lanka informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of the Marshall Islands had intended to abstain.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Benin.

Mr. Amehou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): I wish to point out that my vote was not properly recorded.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The Secretariat will take note.

I call on the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I just want to ask that in future the Secretariat read out on exactly which paragraphs delegations are voting so as to avoid all misunderstandings and the taking of positions that might not be consistent with their intentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call now on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Cyprus, Ecuador, Georgia, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Marshall Islands, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, San Marino, Turkmenistan, Ukraine

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14, as a whole, was adopted by 82 votes to 37, with 20 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions.

Mr. King (United States of America): As we do each year on such draft resolutions, the United States voted "no" on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14. The United States would never, notwithstanding its commitment to nuclear disarmament, negotiate, approve or sign a convention of the type called for in this draft resolution. Such a convention is simply not a practical approach to the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament. The considerable progress towards that goal that has been achieved to date has been made by a realistic step-by-step process that embraces bilateral, unilateral and multilateral measures. My delegation is convinced that this process can continue to bear fruit in the years ahead.

We note that this year's version has dropped the annex section of last year's, which contained a draft convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. Could it be that the sponsor of this draft resolution is no longer interested in the convention which would have prohibited the development, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons as called for in the draft convention's fifth preambular paragraph? Is it possible that the sponsor of the draft resolution is no longer willing to use the phrase "the five nuclear-weapon States", which appeared in article 3, paragraph 3 of the draft convention in resolution 52/39 C? We wonder.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I should like to explain Japan's abstention in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons". Japan, which has sorrowful experience of atomic bombings, fervently desires that the use of nuclear weapons, which causes incomparable human suffering, will never be repeated and firmly believes that continuous efforts should be made towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Having said that, as far as draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14 is concerned, I should like to state Japan's conviction that the only way for us to realize a world free of nuclear weapons, in the present international reality, is to achieve steady and step-by-step progress in nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. For that purpose Japan attaches particular importance to the strengthening of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime, to the early conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty and to the concrete efforts made by the five nuclear-weapon States for nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, Japan advocates multilateral discussions on possible future steps, as draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.42, entitled "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons", provides in its operative paragraph 4.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.19, under agenda item 77, which is entitled "Consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)".

As it seems that no members of the Committee wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken on the draft resolution, I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.19. The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The Chairman: If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.19 was adopted.

The Chairman: If no delegation wishes to explain its position on the draft resolution just adopted, the Committee will now consider draft resolutions listed under cluster 2, "Other weapons of mass destruction".

The first draft resolution in that cluster is A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1, under agenda item 78, and it is entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".

The second draft resolution is A/C.1/53/L.9, entitled "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes".

The third draft resolution is A/C.1/53/L.28, entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol".

The last draft resolution in that cluster is A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

If no delegation wishes to make a general statement, other than an explanation of its position or vote, on draft resolutions contained in this cluster, the Committee will proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".

Does any delegation wish to explain its position or vote before a decision is taken? I see none.

The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction", was introduced by the representative of Hungary at the 18th meeting, on 29 October 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2. The Republic of the congo has also become a sponsor.

In connection with this draft resolution, I should like to read out the following statement on behalf of the Secretary-General:

> "By paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1, the General Assembly would

request the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention and to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences, as well as the decisions contained in the final report of the Special Conference, including all necessary assistance to the Ad Hoc Group. It should be noted that the Review Conferences and the Special Conference are conferences of the States parties to the Convention. As was the case in the past, conferences of multilateral disarmament treaties, for instance the Seabed Treaty and the Environmental Modification Convention (ENMOD) include in their rules of procedure provisions concerning the arrangements for meeting the cost of the conferences, including the sessions of preparatory committees. Under those arrangements no additional cost was borne by the regular budget of the Organization. Accordingly, the Secretary-General considers that his mandate under draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 to render the necessary assistance and required services for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences and the Special Conference has no financial implications for the regular budget of the United Nations and that associated costs would be met in accordance with the financial arrangements to be made by the conference of the Convention. The Committee's attention is drawn to the established practice that all activities related to the international conventions or treaties which under their respective legal instruments are to be financed outside the regular budget of the United Nations may only be undertaken when sufficient resources to cover the activities in question have been received from the States parties in advance."

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I have heard no objection to the draft resolution being adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.6/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The Committee will now take action on the second draft resolution in cluster 2, document A/C.1/53/L.9, on agenda item 71 (l). The draft resolution is entitled "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes".

If no delegations wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken, I shall call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.9, entitled "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes", was introduced by the representative of Nigeria at the 16th meeting, on 27 October 1998. Besides the sponsor listed in the draft resolution, an additional sponsor is listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman: The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.9 was adopted.

The Chairman: I now call on those delegations wishing to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My delegation has been fully supportive of the central objective of this draft resolution and has therefore joined the consensus. India was one country among the few that had requested the retention of the question of radiological weapons on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, as we believe that the international community must remain vigilant to the grave dangers posed by nuclear or radioactive waste and the possibility of their military use.

Operative paragraph 8 of the draft resolution refers to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. As a developing country, India attaches great importance not only to the safety but also to the full utilization of all aspects of the fuel cycle to derive maximum benefits. Therefore, spent fuel is not waste but is also a valuable resource. Besides, the Joint Convention suffers from the drawback that it does not cover military wastes which are relevant in the context of radiological weapons. Therefore, we would have reservations on operative paragraph 8.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation supported draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.9, introduced by the delegation of Nigeria. We believe that the draft resolution includes matters of great importance and reflects, among other things, concerns regarding any use of nuclear wastes that would constitute radiological warfare and would pose a serious threat to the security of nations. Therefore, the appeal to all States to take appropriate measures to ensure that any dumping of nuclear or radioactive wastes does not violate the sovereignty of States is very important, as is the request that the Conference on Disarmament intensify efforts for the adoption of a convention banning radiological weapons. We take this opportunity to reiterate our support for the creation of an ad hoc committee at the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate such a convention.

The Chairman: There being no other delegations wishing to explain their position on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.9, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.28, entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol", under agenda item 71 (c).

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.28, entitled "Measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol", was introduced by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement at the 21st meeting, on 2 November 1998. As already corrected, the word "recent" in the first line of the fifth preambular paragraph has been deleted. The correction is contained in A/C.1/53/INF/3. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman: If no delegation wishes to explain its vote or position before a decision is taken, I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia,, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Israel, Republic of Korea, United States of America

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.28 was adopted by 136 votes to none, with 3 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegations wish to explain their vote or position on the draft resolution just adopted, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1, under agenda item 71 (t). The draft resolution is entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction", was introduced by the representative of Poland at the 16th, meeting on 27 October 1998. The text has been corrected in the fourth line of operative paragraph 7. The phrase "in accordance with the Convention" should read "in accordance with the provisions of the Convention". That correction is contained in document A/C.1/53/INF/3.

I also draw attention to the third preambular paragraph and the blank spaces to be filled. The Rapporteur will include the number of additional States that have ratified the Convention and the total number of Member States of the Organization in his report on this draft resolution when it goes before the General Assembly for adoption.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Poland on a point of order.

Mr. Tomaszewski (Poland) (*interpretation from French*): Some delegations have drawn our attention to the French text of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1, the original being in English. In operative paragraph 2 the English text reads,

(*spoke in English*)

> "*Stresses* the importance of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical weapons in verifying compliance with the provisions of the Convention".

(*spoke in French*)

The French text does not correspond exactly to the English original.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Egypt for an explanation of vote before a decision is taken on the draft resolution.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): Egypt has traditionally supported all measures leading to the promotion of international and regional stability and has always committed itself to engaging in constructive actions in fulfilment of that objective. It is in this spirit that we cannot but sympathize with the general thrust of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1, as it addresses a global instrument which aims at prohibiting a whole category of weapons of mass destruction, namely, chemical weapons, thus giving the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction its effective impact in the field of disarmament as opposed to non-proliferation.

Nevertheless, Egypt would like to stress once again its well-known position vis-à-vis the Convention and its implications in the Middle East region. Our commitment, explained vividly, to the prohibition of chemical weapons and all weapons of mass destruction is best exemplified by President Mubarak's 1990 initiative on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction, which underscored the following elements: first, a total prohibition in the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction without exception, whether nuclear, chemical or biological; secondly, that all States in the region, without exception, make a solemn declaration of regional commitments and obligations in this regard; and, thirdly, that measures for verification of compliance be underscored. This prompted the Security Council to support our initiative, as mentioned in resolution 687 (1991) and in the Security Council statement of 1992.

In July 1991, Foreign Minister Amre Moussa, in his letter addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, explained that a priority must be designated to free the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction, increase the security of all States in the region through a lower level of armament and achieve equal and reciprocal security for all States in the region — not through a qualitative edge or military superiority, but through dialogue, negotiation, and a deep commitment to peace and equal security for all.

Although Egypt participated actively in the long and arduous negotiations that took place in the Conference on Disarmament and that led to the elaboration of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, its position has been voiced since day one, at the time of the Convention's opening for signature in January 1993 at Paris. Indeed, our standpoint emanates from and is firmly based on our regional considerations and concerns. For so long now, Israel has repeatedly stated on different occasions and in various forums that the application of this Convention should include all States in the Middle East region within a mutually accepted verification mechanism.

In all frankness, I have to admit that we are not at odds for once, and what Israel here seems to advocate agrees with us in terms of aspirations. The Government of Egypt shares this view, but in a wider spectrum not limited only to chemical weapons or only to biological weapons, but both together, along with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to which all States of the Middle East are parties, with the exception of Israel, which continues to refuse to join and rejects the placing of its nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency full-scope safeguards. It is for that purpose, of striking the proper balance between security concerns and the interests of the States of the region, and also for the purpose of redressing the prevailing asymmetrical situation with regard to the legal obligations of the States in the Middle East, and furthermore for the purpose of being consistent with one's argument, that we urge Israel to listen to its own argument and to demonstrate political will.

For that particular reason Egypt has declined to sign the Chemical Weapons Convention until Israel joins the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We urge Israel to apply the same argument it seems to advocate and in fact employs with regard to the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention.

In conclusion, by virtue of feeling compelled to furnish cover-up arguments one unintentionally falls into the trap of self-defeating argument. We regret that this notion has characterized the actions of Israel. Egypt once again acted in good faith when it ratified the NPT in 1980 and has remained faithful to the regime since then by working to consolidate its edifice and *raison d'être*.

Despite all these considerations, my delegation has not requested a recorded vote on the draft resolution. However, we do not consider ourselves to be part of any consensus decision to be taken on this draft resolution today and would like to register our reservation on the content and letter of operative paragraph 5.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Is there any objection to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1 being adopted without a vote?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those delegations wishing to explain their positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Al-Besbas (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya): My country would like to associate itself totally with the explanation made by the Egyptian delegation on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation joined the consensus on the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction", contained in document A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1, as orally corrected by the First Committee.

My delegation attaches great importance to the full and non-discriminatory implementation of all provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and firmly believes that to this end the member States should intensify their efforts within the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) so as to resolve expeditiously and in a satisfactory manner all outstanding issues.

Mr. Efrat (Israel): As in the case of last year's draft resolution, my country joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.38/Rev.1. Furthermore, Israel joins the community of nations in welcoming the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

It is in our signature of the Convention, and, subsequently, in the active role we took in the joint endeavour to craft it into a workable mechanism, that Israel's general vision of the world in which it wishes to live is reflected. Yet it is in Israel's continuing interest to preserve the Convention's core balance between the State's duty to comply and its right to protect itself from intrusive and abusive violation of its security and its commercial and proprietary interests. By signing the Convention, Israel expressed the hope that others in its region would soon follow suit.

The reason Israel has not yet ratified the Convention is connected to the unique strategic and political environment in which we still live. At the signing ceremony in Paris in 1993, Israel's Foreign Minister openly stated Israel's position that the Chemical Weapons Convention must refer to our region and that the region at large must adhere to its principles. In that context, Israel then made it clear that it would seek to ratify the Convention subject to its regional concerns, as well as to its constitutional concerns and legislative timetable. These considerations remain no less valid today.

Israel is aware of, and indeed welcomes, the fact that certain Arab States have signed or even ratified the Convention. However, it is unfortunately also a well-known reality that none of the chemical-weapons capable, or suspected chemical-weapon armed Arab States have signed, let alone ratified, the Chemical Weapons Convention. Indeed, key known signatory Arab States have indicated collectively that they would not change their position even if Israel ratified the Convention. Among them are countries which in the past have resorted to the use of chemical weapons and which are believed to be developing capabilities in this field, even as the world is pledging to eradicate for ever all chemical weapons.

From Israel's perspective, not only have the chemical-weapons threats against it not receded in recent years, but have become more salient and acute. What I have said must not be construed as prejudging the outcome of a future Israeli decision on the matter of the ratification of or continued Israeli support for the Convention. Favourable changes in the security climate will of course favourably affect Israel's attitude and consideration of this issue.

Mr. Aldois (Yemen) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation wishes supports the comments made by the delegation of Egypt.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As there are no further speakers, consideration of draft resolutions in cluster 2 is now concluded.

Before moving to cluster 4, I wish to remind delegations that the Secretariat would like to know today the positions of delegations regarding the postponement of votes on clusters 6 to 10 and draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.3 and A/C.1/53/L.37 from cluster 1. If delegations have any doubts, are in negotiation or have no instructions, ask for a postponement as that would make it possible for the Chair and the Secretariat to conduct proceedings in an orderly manner. One delegation has asked for the postponement of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40 from cluster 3. Therefore, cluster 3 will not be taken up today.

The Committee will now proceed to general statements on cluster 4, "Conventional weapons".

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): On a number of occasions Algeria has expressed its concern regarding the illicit proliferation of small arms and the relationship between terrorist groups and weapons and drug traffickers. Given this situation, we believe that it is necessary to have a prompt, coordinated response from the international community that is able to deal with the challenge posed by such groups to a number of countries.

That is why Algeria thinks it is very important to have the Department for Disarmament Affairs coordinate efforts in the United Nations system. Scattered efforts would not be able to resolve all the problems posed by the illicit proliferation of small arms. Algeria supported the creation of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and plans to support its efforts, so we cannot agree that bodies other than the Department for Disarmament Affairs should come along and take up a matter that does not fall within their purview.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): Swaziland, as a landlocked country, has found it necessary to speak on this item. Also, by virtue of our membership of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, we consider that we need more efforts to be made and more assistance channelled to smaller nations, particularly developing nations, so that they can protect themselves against the illicit trafficking of small arms, which have been clearly shown to be used in the commission of crimes, including armed robbery, and assisting the toppling of Governments. Swaziland, a nation State in Africa, believes that the Convention on mercenarism has to do with an African reality, and therefore the flow of arms of this nature to our region should be totally curbed. For this reason, we appeal to the international community to assist us in curbing such tendencies.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As no other delegation wishes to make a statement, the Committee will proceed to the consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7 under agenda item 71 (f). The draft resolution is entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them".

Does any delegation object to that draft resolution being considered?

Mr. Sylla (Mali) (*interpretation from French*): We asked for consideration of this draft resolution to be deferred, if possible, until tomorrow morning.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Very well. In that case, the Committee will proceed to the consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1.

I call on the representative of Swaziland on a point of order.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): I am speaking on a point of clarification. Earlier, when the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic was asking for the postponement of action on one of the draft resolutions in the clusters before the Committee, the Chair intimated that a time limit for giving notice to the Chair is imperative. My delegation is now confused and wonders if the Chair has shifted from that noble position, which, to my delegation, would seem to assist the Chair in successfully directing the deliberations of the Committee; delegations would cease to apply for a postponement at random, but rather through the circulation of the notices stating the reasons for such a postponement. That would alleviate the unnecessary backlog in the Committee, which would otherwise be quite pronounced.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The deferral of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7 is based on the fact that Mali is to circulate a revision, and inasmuch as it will be a revised version delegations will be given 24 hours to ponder and consider the text. That was the message that the Chair received.

As for the rest, I would like to recall that the position of the Chair is that we would like to be informed a day before of any request to defer voting because of lack of instructions or ongoing negotiations or simply because a delegation wants consideration to be deferred.

As to Mali's request on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7, that request was based on the announcement of a revised text. The rules of procedure are very clear on this matter: delegations are entitled to 24 hours to consider the text. I hope that answers the delegation of Swaziland's question.

The Committee will now take up draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1, entitled "Illicit traffic in small arms", under agenda item 71.

(*spoke in English*)

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1, entitled "Illicit traffic in small arms", was introduced by the representative of South Africa at the 20th meeting, on 30 October 1998. A technical correction to the text was made in A/C.1/53/INF/3, as follows: in line 1 of the eleventh preambular paragraph, the words "increased cooperation" should read "increased cooperation and coordination".

In addition to the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2. The Republic of the Congo has also become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Cuba, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before a decision is taken on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Cuba fully shares the concerns that motivated the main sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1 to submit this new initiative to the Committee. That is why we have given our support to this draft and would like to contribute to its practical implementation while taking active part in the consultations conducted by the Secretary-General under the terms of operative paragraph 1.

At the same time, we wish to say that our support for this text does not prejudge the position of our delegation regarding the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and other Related Materials. The entry into force of that Convention is welcomed in the sixth preambular paragraph of the text that we are about to adopt. Cuba did not participate in the negotiations on this Convention, which took place within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), in which my country does not participate. Furthermore, the Convention was open for signing only by States members of that Organization, so Cuba does not enjoy the right to sign it.

In addition, we believe that certain other, secondary elements in the text could be improved upon in future years. That is why we will be following its development very closely.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no other delegation wishes to explain its position before action is taken, we will now take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1.

The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote. If I see no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegations wish to explain their positions on the draft resolution just adopted. The Committee will now take up cluster 5, on regional disarmament and security.

(*spoke in English*)

I call upon those delegations wishing to make general statements on that subject.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Republic of Korea attaches particular importance to the draft resolution on regional disarmament contained in document A/C.1/53/L.34, which is before us in cluster 5. The draft resolution, which is aimed at recognizing and promoting the crucial role of regional and subregional efforts for disarmament and arms control will serve to encourage and help facilitate the regional process. Global and regional approaches to disarmament complement each other. It is important that regional disarmament approaches should be based on the specific conditions in the region concerned. Sustained efforts to cultivate a habit of dialogue or to build confidence among the countries concerned are also indispensable for fostering a stable regional-security environment.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF), which is the only region-wide Government-level security-dialogue arrangement in the region, has served as a vehicle to uphold and promote a global disarmament approach such as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Government of the Republic of Korea has been fully committed to the ARF process and will continue actively to participate in the work of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

In North-East Asia, there is no regional process of any kind among countries despite the uncertain and fluid security climate in the region. In our view, the time is ripe for the North-East Asian countries to come up with a multilateral dialogue on peace, security and cooperation.

We believe that multilateral dialogue would help them explore ways and means of building confidence and enhance transparency and predictability for the sake of the common security and prosperity of the region. My delegation looks forward to a concrete move by the countries concerned towards the establishment of a regional security dialogue.

Having said that, we strongly support the adoption of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34 by consensus.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): My delegation fully advocates a regional disarmament centre, especially in the spirit of the resuscitation of the centre for disarmament in Africa. We hold this belief because, following the spirit of the Pelindaba Treaty, a historic Treaty that we in Africa have signed, we are clearly indicating that disarmament in our region should become a reality.

At the same time, I take the opportunity to speak to those regions that may disrupt our focused purpose, the process of disarmament in our region. Time and time again we see arms sent for sale in Africa, arms that in the long run may disrupt the peace that Africa craves. Therefore, disarmament will become a reality only if the efforts of the international community, including the United Nations, to assist us in Africa become a reality.

Mr. Laptsenak (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): The tasks facing the various regions and countries in connection with fulfilling their obligations under agreements have been facilitated by the fact that the positions of Member States on questions of the maintenance of peace and security have come closer together. The new concept of security based on the disarmament process is multifaceted and now encompasses all regions, continents and countries. We believe that particular importance attaches to the question of arms control the main factor and the question of machinery for safeguarding stability and security in our continent.

We want to make our own contribution to this process by establishing a stable system of European security. As a country that has removed nuclear missiles from its territory, we consider that joint efforts should be made to ensure a secure future for the continent. One of the important factors in determining the further development of the security system in the twenty-first century is the fate of the European Community and of the regional organizations within it. If there is to be real confidence between countries rather than mere declarations, stabilization is required. This could be achieved through more active disarmament measures, reductions of military might and greater multilateral exchanges of information on military issues.

We all have the same objective: to establish a security system that would contribute in every way to reducing military might so that the spirit of partnership would be the determining factor of our security. That is the objective of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23, which we introduced yesterday on behalf of seven other sponsors.

Finally, at the request of some delegations with which consultations are still going on, I wish to take this opportunity to ask you, Mr. Chairman, to have consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23 deferred to a later stage.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As no other delegation wishes to make a general statement at this stage, the Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34, under agenda item 71 (q). The draft resolution is entitled "Regional disarmament".

Does any delegation wish to explain its position or vote before a decision is taken? I see none.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34, entitled "Regional disarmament", was introduced by the representative of Pakistan at the 18th meeting, on 29 October 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34 have expressed the wish that it be adopted without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.34 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.35, under agenda item 71 (r). The draft resolution is entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels".

I now call on those representatives who wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My delegation proceeds from the premise that the United Nations Disarmament Commission had undertaken a detailed consideration of regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security and came forward with guidelines and recommendations adopted by consensus at the 1993 substantive session. Given that these guidelines exist, we question the need for yet another exercise, even in the Conference on Disarmament, which in fact is the body entrusted with the consideration of issues of global applicability.

Proposals for conventional arms control in South Asia, a reference to which is made in the sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.35, also do not carry weight. In fact, as is well known, India and Pakistan are engaged in a bilateral composite dialogue in which the first agenda item is peace and security, including confidence-building measures.

Therefore, the narrow definition in the draft resolution does not fully reflect the security concerns of all States in South Asia and adopts an approach far more restrictive than the one on which the composite bilateral dialogue is based.

For the reasons given above, we will cast a negative vote on the draft resolution.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As my delegation has done in the case of similar draft resolutions in previous years, it will abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.35. Cuba recognizes the validity of some of the ideas contained in the text, such as the special responsibility of States with larger military capabilities in promoting agreements for regional security. However, the draft contains certain other elements that my delegation does not agree with. It strays from the guidelines and recommendations regarding regional approaches that have been adopted by the General Assembly after intensive negotiations in the Disarmament Commission.

The preambular part of the draft resolution avoids the question of the fundamental importance of effective participation by all States in the region or subregion concerned in the process of arms control that may take place. Nor is there any reference to the need to take into account the particular characteristics of each region and the legitimate national security interests of States. The text also overlooks the validity of the global process of arms control and its interrelationship with processes that at the regional and subregional levels.

As regards the operative part, we believe that any reference to the responsibilities of the Conference on Disarmament in dealing with specific items, such as conventional arms control at the subregional and regional levels, should take into account the need for that forum to do its work on the basis of the priorities established in the field of disarmament.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no other delegation wishes to take the floor, I will call on the Committee Secretary to conduct the voting.

A recorded vote has been requested.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.35, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", was introduced by the representative of Pakistan at the 21st meeting, on 2 November 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia

Against:
Bhutan, India

Abstaining:
Cuba

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.35 was adopted by 129 votes to 2, with 1 abstention.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the representative of Swaziland, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): My delegation supported the draft resolution because of its advocacy of universal control of arms at both the regional and subregional levels. In our view, through such an effort that a common denominator for the total elimination of the dangerous arms of war can be realized and achieved. In analysing the present situation in my region, my delegation fully believes that it is from such a perspective, and when such a draft resolution is taken completely seriously, that peace, which is a necessity for regional development, can be realized.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): That concludes the Committee's consideration of draft resolutions today. I thank delegations for their cooperation and now call on the Secretary, who will give a provisional summary of the requests for deferral of votes on draft resolutions in clusters 6 to 10 and the two draft resolutions I referred to in cluster 1.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): First, I shall read out the requests for voting to take place tomorrow. The four draft resolutions are A/C.1/53/L.3, L.33, L.37 and L.47.

Those are the requests for voting tomorrow on draft resolutions in clusters 1 to 5. In other words, all draft resolutions in those clusters that have so far not been voted on but on which there is a request to vote tomorrow.

The following list is of requests to postpone voting on draft resolutions in clusters 6 to 10: in cluster 6, A/C.1/53/L.4; and in cluster 7, A/C.1/53/L.5, L.46, L.12 and L.50. There are no requests for postponement in clusters 8, 9 and 10. Therefore, only five draft resolutions in clusters 6 to 10 will be postponed.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I hope that now everything is clear. There are two separate aspects to the clusters that we have considered today. Today some delegations have asked for the draft resolutions that had been postponed to be voted on tomorrow. In addition, as regards the clusters to be taken up tomorrow, some requests for postponement have already been made. Delegations that are unclear about what to do should approach the secretariat after the meeting.

Tomorrow the Committee will begin with the draft resolutions from cluster 1. If any delegation is opposed to requests for them to be considered, that too should be made known.

I call on the representative of Malaysia.

Mr. Abdullah Faiz (Malaysia): As you know, Mr. Chairman, this morning I asked for clarification on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45. My delegation had not asked for a deferral, but as I understand it a particular delegation asked that it be deferred. My delegation has no problem with a deferral, but since we are the main sponsor of this draft resolution, that delegation should at least have had the courtesy to inform my delegation.

However, I should like to inquire here about cluster 1. Tomorrow four draft resolutions will be considered. What has happened to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 and when will it be considered?

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): No request to consider A/C.1/53/L.45 tomorrow has been received. It therefore continues to be postponed.

I call on the representative of Spain.

Ms. Rico (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Before the meeting is adjourned, would it be possible for the Chairman or the Secretary read out a list of the draft resolutions that will be taken up tomorrow?

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Japan.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): In cluster 4, as draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1 has already been distributed and as I have already introduced it, my delegation wishes action to be taken tomorrow.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The Secretary has taken note of Japan's request.

I call on the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): We fully appreciate the efforts being made by the Chair and the Secretary to help the smooth proceeding of our deliberations. However, frankly, we are still a little confused over what will be the exact programme of work tomorrow and in the coming days. As we understand it, today the Committee acted on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14 from cluster 1. The Secretary referred a few minutes ago to requests for action on the four draft resolutions belonging to clusters 1 to 5, but when will the Committee act on the remaining draft resolutions in this category? If it is not tomorrow, when will the Committee take up these matters?

I also support the request by my colleague from Spain. To facilitate the more efficient working of the Committee and to enable the full participation of its members, whenever there is a new programme or a change of programme, perhaps that could be written on a sheet of paper and circulated among the participants in the deliberations of the Committee. I would appreciate it if the secretariat could attend to this request from my delegation.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Just a word of explanation, if possible, in response to the delegation of the Republic of Korea. Every day we record requests for the postponement of consideration of draft resolutions. Every day we also record requests for the postponed. That is true of the draft resolutions in clusters 1 to 5 that the Secretary has just read out. If we are not informed of a request for the consideration of a draft resolution that has previously been postponed, it remains postponed.

Every day we start again with cluster 1, and every day we go from cluster 1 through to cluster 10. I hope that is clear.

Tomorrow we will begin with draft resolutions the consideration of which has been requested. However, if any such draft resolution still poses difficulties for a delegation, then that delegation should ask for a postponement. Let me take draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 as an example. A request had been made to take it up tomorrow; it was a draft resolution that had been postponed.

(*spoke in English*)

Now some delegations have asked that that draft resolution be put to a vote tomorrow. If there is no objection, that will be done.

If delegations have any requests for postponements they should tell the Secretariat and the requests will be noted.

Tomorrow morning the Secretary will read out the latest information about requests for postponement, and representatives will then have a clear idea of the draft resolutions the Committee will examine tomorrow.

I call on the representative of Mongolia.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your clarification. In connection with cluster 1 issues, my delegation found that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1, presented by Mongolia, has been postponed twice. We still do not know the reason. We would really appreciate it if the secretariat could tell us whether it was for a technical reason or for any other reason. If there are no compelling reasons, we would like to have the decision taken on this draft resolution tomorrow.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to respond to some requests and appeals. First, in regard to Japan's request for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1 to be voted on tomorrow: because this draft resolution will require a report on programme budget implications, so it has to be postponed and cannot be taken up tomorrow.

As regards Mongolia's request on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1, one delegation, the Chinese, has made a request for postponement.

As for the request from Spain for a list, I would like to read out the list for the time being, taking into account all the requests either to vote tomorrow or to postpone. The list for tomorrow is, for the time being, as follows: in cluster 1, draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.3, L.37 and L.47 are scheduled for voting tomorrow; in cluster 4, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33; in cluster 6, all draft resolutions will be taken up except A/C.1/53/L.4; in cluster 7, all draft resolutions will be taken up except A/C.1/53/L.5, L.12, L.46 and L.50; and in clusters 8, 9 and 10, all draft resolutions will be taken up.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French)*: I call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): The issue I wish to raise is about some of the procedures that seem to be developing, and I think it might be worthwhile to see whether we cannot address them in informal consultations first before addressing the issue across the floor.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.